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Studies of Miao-I Societies in Kweichow

(Kweichow Miao-I shê-hui yen-chiu)

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General Conditions of the Miao-I in Kweichow

Ch'en Kuo-chün

1. Introduction

114 121 The year before last I was commissioned by certain organizations to investigate the conditions of the Miao-I societies in Kweichow. After having received the order, I left for the Miao-I areas of the various hsien districts to start work on the spot. Unfortunately, the references I had previously gathered were of little use. After I had reached the Miao-I district, all that I had seen and heard through personal contacts in the wild mountains and lonely hamlets I recorded faithfully on the spot in the midst of fatigue and traveling. In three years I covered the whole province, and the amount of material I collected was immense. Before it had been organized and put into shape, inquiries came from many quarters concerned with the welfare of the Miao-I people, but these could not be replied to one by one. Furthermore, conditions in the Miao-I areas are quite different from those in the interior, and people who have never been there are prone to picture the Miao-I as a mysterious people and to distort the facts about them. The present article "General Conditions of the Miao-I Societies in Kweichow" serves as an introduction to a knowledge of the Miao-I areas. It is hoped that the readers will be pleased with this survey.

2. Racial Groups

175 563 1) Origin and History. Among the 450,000,000 Chinese nationals, there are a large number of ethnic groups. According to ancient history, there were the Hua-hsia, the Tung-i, the Ching, the Wu, the Pa-yueh, the Tung-hu, the Su-shen, the Hsiung-nu, the T'u-chüeh [Turks], the Ch'iang, the Hsi-ts'ang [Tibetans], the Miao, the Yao, and many others. After a [illegible] thousand years [2] of assimilation and amalgamation, those who

[2 cont.]
175 remain are the Chinese (Han), the Manchus, the Mongols, the
563 Moslems, the Tibetans and the Miao-I. According to scholars
who had made studies in the genealogies of both the ancient and
modern races, they are all descendants of Emperors Yen [Shên
Nung] and Huang [Huang Ti]; they belong to the same branch
and share the same origin. Due to geographical barriers and
environmental causes there came into being many kinds of ethnic
groups with different habits and customs.

We are here concerned with the origin and history of the
101 Miao and the I, two of the oldest tribes in China. In early
175 Chinese classics they were both referred to as the "Miao-Man"
[563] [Miao savages], but actually they were two distinct ethnic groups
who should not be confused. The I were originally the aborigines
inhabiting the border regions of Yunnan, Kweichow and Kwangsi
in the southwest since very early times up to the present. As
for the present-day Miao, they were often erroneously taken as
the "San-Miao," which, however, was the name of a state and
not the name of an ethnic group. The ancient ethnic name of
the Miao was "Li," while the name of "Miao" as used today is a
phonetic borrowing from the word "Man" first used in the Han
Dynasty, and is not the "Miao" of the "San-Miao." During the
time of the Five Emperors [Pre-historical period] this tribe lived
in the lower middle reaches of the Yangtze River, and later due
to an increase in their number and the comparative fertility of
the Yellow River banks, they were led by their chieftain, Ch'ih
yu, northward across the Yellow River, and came into immediate
conflict with the Chinese there. They were expelled by Huang
Ti [Yellow Emperor] after having suffered great setbacks, and
later were again pacified during the Chou Dynasty. When Ch'u
[a feudal state] became strong, the Miao tribe was also invaded
and assimilated by the Chinese. At the time when Chin and
Ch'u subjugated Pa and Shu in the south, the entire Yangtze
valley was acculturated by the Chinese. The remnant Miao tribe
then gradually went southward to Hunan, Kwang-tung, Kwangsi
and Yunnan, and finally to Kweichow, where they mingled with
[133] the native I tribe, lived in the high mountains and deep valleys,
and became entirely segregated from the world outside.

[2 cont.]
101 Afterwards, due to increases in population, the Chinese began
175 migrating southwestward to live side by side with the Miao-I. But
Chinese maladministration, which alienated popular support,
caused the Miao-I to become rebellious from time to time.
[648] Even today, they remain a serious problem in the southwest.
000 So if we recognize the origin and history of the Miao and I, as
well as their intimate relations with the Chinese, all being the
same descendants of the Emperors Yen and Huang and belonging
to the same racial stock, then today at the height of the war of
resistance [the Sino-Japanese War] for the survival of the great
Chinese nation, the Miao and I can take their rightful place
among all the ethnic groups of China to march shoulder to
shoulder to the battle front, to prosper and to perish together.

[3] 2) Population. The Miao and I who are distributed
131 over a large area in the southwest of China have a history of
161 several thousand years, and their joint population totals more
than 20,000,000. Here the term southwest refers to Kweichow,
Yunnan, Szechwan, Sikang, Hunan, Kwangsi and Kwangtung.
In these provinces there are scattered the Miao and I tribes.
Kweichow, being a "Man" territory in ancient times, is especially known as the headquarters of the Miao and I. Among the
82 hsien in Kweichow, the Miao-I are found in 60 hsien, in
which they are extensively distributed. There are no accurate
figures on the population of the Miao and I in Kweichow. According to the estimates of the Kweichow Provincial [Kuomintang]
Party Headquarters more than one-third of the total population
of Kweichow are Miao and I. But, according to the estimates
of Tao Lü-kung and Yang Wen-hsün in the Chung-wai ti-li
ta-ch'üan [Complete Chinese and Foreign Geography], the
Miao-I comprise three- fourths of the total population, the
Chinese being only one-fourth.

161 The total population in Kweichow is about 11,216,400, of
whom, according to the foregoing estimate, 8,412,300 would
be Miao and I. But these two sets of figures are both exaggerated.
According to my own estimate, about 40 percent of the population in Kweichow are Miao and I, so that they will be in the
000 neighborhood of 4,000,000. With such a large population in

[3 cont.] With such a large population,[1] in
101 184 Kweichow, there are apt to be many ethnic varieties of the Miao-I, whose names are generally given by the Chinese and tacitly acknowledged by the Miao-I themselves. Most of these tribes live in high mountains and deep valleys and are isolated one from the other with the result that there are notable differences in locations, languages and customs. Thus they are often classified according to the colors of their costumes and other characteristics.

For instance, there are, according to the colors of the clothes the Ch'ing [blue or green] Miao, the Hê [black] Miao, the Pê [white] Miao and the Hung [red] Miao. Those who are differentiated according to the areas they live in are known as the Kao-p'o [high slope] Miao, the P'ing-ti [level ground] Miao, the Yueh-pien [boundary] Miao, the Shan [mountain] Miao, the Pa [embankment] Miao, the Tung [east] Miao, the Hsi [west] Miao, and the Ch'ien [bamboo grove] Miao. Those distinguished by the names of places in which they live are the Shui-hsi Miao, the Chia-ch'ê Miao, the Kun-tang Miao, the Ch'ê-chai Miao, the Hung-chou Miao, the P'ing-fa Miao, the Ch'ing-chiang-he Miao, the Kê-meng-ku-yang Miao, the Ku-lan Miao, the Tzu-chiang Miao and the Hsi-chi Miao. Those distinguished by the flower designs of their clothes are the Hua [flower] Miao, the Ta-hua [big flower] Miao, the Hsiao-hua [small flower] Miao, and the Hua-i [flowery dress] Miao. Those distinguished by the styles of their skirts are the Chang-ch'ün [long skirt] Miao, the Ai-ch'ün [short skirt] Miao, and the T'uan-ch'ün [circular skirt] Miao. Those distinguished by their trades are the Ta-t'ieh [blacksmith] Miao and the Tz'u-ku [water-plant?] Miao. Those distinguished by the styles of their ornaments are the Ku-hsün Miao, the Chen-tou Miao, the Tieh-tung Miao, the Chien-ting Miao, the Hê-chüeh Miao, and so on, the list being [4] inexhaustible.

According to the Pai-Miao-t'u [One Hundred Miao Pictures], sold in the secondhand bookstores in Kweiyang, there are 124 different Miao groups in all strange and quaint manners. The first 82 groups belong to Kweichow and the rest to Yunnan. Among those 82 groups, nine are Ch'i-lao, six are Chung-chia, five are Lung-chia, and two are Lolo. The others being all different, I

[1] [i.e., about 4,000,000 in the author's estimation.—Analyst]

[4 cont.]
101 shall not enumerate them separately. According to my classi-
184 fication the I in Kweichow may be divided into Chung-chia,
Sui-chia, Tung-chia and Chuang-chia; the Miao may be
divided into Hê Miao, Hua Miao, Ch'ing Miao, Pê Miao and
Hung Miao. The Hê Miao and Hu Miao are more numerous
and occupy a large territory. The Hê Miao live in the various hsien
districts in the southeast, and the Hua Miao in the northwestern
districts. The Hung Miao, Ch'ing Miao and Pê Miao are fewer
in number and live in some narrow strips of land. The Hung
Miao are limited to T'ung-jen and Sung-t'ao in the northeast;
the Ch'ing Miao, to Kweiyang, Ting-fan, Ch'ing-chen and
An-shun in the middle of the province; and the Pê Miao, to
Kweiyang, Kwei-ting and Lung-li also in the middle. The
Chung-chia and the Tung-chia among the I are the most
numerous and occupy wider areas, being chiefly in the middle
and the south. The Tung-chia are mostly in the southeast
corner, and the Sui-chia in Li-po, Tu-shan, San-ho, Tu-chiang,
and Hsia-chiang in the south. A small number of Tung-chia
[Chuang-chia?] emigrated several decades ago from I-pei,
Lo-ch'eng and San-chiang in Kwangsi and settled along the
commercial highways in the border regions.

181 3) Characteristics. Physically, the Miao-I are a very
[147] sturdy and healthy people. They work hard all year round
from sunrise to sunset, barefooted, wearing little in wind and
rain, and living with Nature itself. Being a simple-minded peo-
ple, they have few vices. Before opium was banned in
[276] Kweichow, only a few Miao-I were addicted to this drug with
the result that they are healthier than the Chinese in every re-
spect. They can endure hardship and are perseverant and patient.
Their outstanding character is honesty and straightforwardness:
anyone who can earn their trust will find them faithful and
true to the last without ever faltering. If you ask them to leap
into the flame they would do so without hesitation. But
their knowledge being limited, they have little judgment, are
stubborn and tardy, and lack the will to progress. They do
everything according to what is handed down from their
ancestors, [5] and it is often difficult to explain things to them.

[5 cont.]
181 However, due to repeated instances of swindling and oppression by
609 the Chinese, they are always on their guard and suspicious of
every good motive. This discord among the racial groups is entirely
the fault of the Chinese, and efforts must be made to
eliminate it. Whenever I arrived at a Miao-I village I often
found at first wariness and restraint on their part. I understood
the cause of such psychology and persisted in dealing with them
in good faith. After we came to know each other better, their
fear soon gave way to warmth and friendliness, which still
lingered on at the time of parting. The Miao-I district I have
seen is actually a garden of harmony and happiness. It is hoped
that those sympathetic to the Miao-I would continue to visit
their areas to influence and help them so as to raise their
standard of living to the level of the other people in China.

3. Livelihood

1) Food. The staple food of the Miao and I consists of
262 rice, corn, buckwheat, potato and huang-li [coarse rice?],
varying according to localities. The mountain terrain in the
northwest produces corn, buckwheat, potato and huang-li, and so
so the principal food of the Miao-I people there is corn, which
is eaten all year round, white potato, buckwheat and the rest
are eaten only occasionally. In the southeast there are more
[243] irrigated fields in which rice is produced. The very poor people
would eat corn, buckwheat and potato, while the others have
both ordinary rice and glutinous rice for food, especially the
latter, which is known colloquially as "the Miao glutinous rice."
[482] Often one sees a Miao or I traveling with a bamboo basket
tied to the waist; this basket contains glutinous rice used as
refreshment during recess from work. Usually the Miao-I eat
264 two meals a day, with an extra noon meal during the busy
agricultural season. When eating at home, they place the food
on a table and sit on stools around it; but sometimes they also
eat outdoors, squatting or standing under the eaves. In the
kind of food they have and their manner of eating, they are
262 the same as the Chinese. One difference is their fondness of

[5 cont.] One difference[1] is their fondness of
262 hot pepper, [6] of which they use a lot in their dishes. To whet
[263] their appetite while eating, they have a bowl of dried pepper
mixed with soup at the table, into which they dip every chopsticksful
of food. The second difference lies in the scarcity of meat,
their food consisting chiefly of vegetables grown by themselves
or bought from the market. The daily dishes are mostly sour
cabbage, sour soup, salted cabbage, preserved cabbage and
pepper mixed with beancurd in different styles of cooking. The
263 third difference is the scarcity of salt in their cuisine due to the
high price of salt in Kweichow. Even the well-to-do Miao-I use
it sparingly. They roll a lump of salt in a cooked dish once and
then save it for future use to last for a long time. The fourth
312 difference is their lack of water. They live in the high moun-
tains, hence the name "kao-shan Miao" [high mountain Miao],
and have to go down to the low land to get their water supply.
[515] The scarcity of water makes them reluctant to wash often. They
[271] are also used to drinking unboiled water and cold rice. Fifthly,
273 they are fond of wine, and their capacity being large, they use
big bowls but sip slowly, enjoying all the while. Often they are
dead drunk when they come back from the market place or from
a party.

291 2) Costumes. The various Miao-I groups retain the special
characteristics of their costumes, which have become the symbols
of their identification. The colors of their clothes are green,
blue, gray, black and white, the other pigments being unavailable.
The dress materials of the Miao-I in the northwest are mostly
home-spun hemp fabrics or cotton cloth obtained from the
[439] Chinese in the market place. In the southeast they produce
[294] cotton, and spin, weave and dye the cloth at home. They sew
the clothes themselves, there being no tailors. The men wear
[302] their hair in chignons piled upon the head and wrapped up in
turbans of blue cloth, which are not removed all year round and
look like basins. The costumes of the women are not as simple
as those of the men as they still retain their ancient styles and
forms, which are too elaborate to relate here. Except the I
women of the Chung-chia and Tung-chia, who are more progres-
sive and wear long jackets and trousers like the Chinese, all the

[1] [from the Chinese.-Analyst]

[6 cont.]

291 Miao-I women wear short upper garments without trousers, the lower part of the body being envoloped in a long skirt. Only the Hê Miao women in the east are fond of wearing short skirts above the knee. All the Miao women are highly conscious of [294] beauty; they plan their clothes carefully and spend most of their time on weaving, designing, and embroidery. However, their everyday clothes are simple. It is only on occasions such as weddings, funerals, dances, festivals, fairs, and religious celebrations [7] that they sport their new clothes and silver ornaments in all styles and colors to attract attention. [301]

3) Lodging. Most of the Miao-I tribes live clustered in 361 hamlets in the mountains, except the Chung-chia and the Sui-chia among the I, who live near water, hence the names "Kao-shan Miao" [high mountain Miao] and "Shui-Chung-chia" [water Chung-chia]. It is said that the Miao-I must live in the high mountains in order to thrive and that if they live at the bottom of the mountains, they would suffer disaster and death. But, today, the Miao-I have gradually learned to live [on the plains] and well-to-do farmers who have moved downhill are increasing in number. Although they cannot avoid pestilence, their suffering is not necessarily more than those living uphill. Most of the Miao-I follow the traditions of their ancestors and live precariously on the cliffs in backward conditions. Their 342 living quarters are generally on one level, but some of the Miao-I in the southeast also build storied houses. In houses of [231] one level men and beasts share the floor, but in the storied houses, men live upstairs and beasts downstairs. An ordinary house has one to three rooms; in the latter case, the rooms are small. If there is only one room, then it is used for cooking, eating, sleeping, and all other purposes. The construction of the houses is rather crude. Except those of a few wealthy families, which are enclosed with wooden or brick walls and covered with mud, tile or slate roofs, an average house is built of bamboo or corn stalks with tree barks as walls and straw for a roof. They are often slanting and dilapidated. Worse still, some of the poorest Hua Miao and Ch'ing Miao still live today in mountain caves in conditions as wretched as those in the inferno.

[*7 cont.*]

4) *Childbirth*. The Miao-I people are physically very
844 sturdy: their ability to procreate and their capacity for farm
work are both great. The women too have to attend to house
chores, being especially strong and fit, they regard childbirth
as a common occurrence. When a married woman is pregnant
[843] she has to be confined in her husband's house. At the time of
childbirth she is attended by her mother-in-law or sister-in-law
or sometimes she is just by herself. The umbilical cord is
broken by means of a piece of stone, and the sac is placed in
an earthen jar and buried underground or hung up high in the
room. The baby is then washed with cold water. The mother
846 remains at home for a week, after which she goes up the hill
to gather firewood or down the field to cultivate the land without
further inhibition or recuperation. They are afraid to have
847 too many children and often get rid of them by drowning or
simply killing them. It is said that when children are numerous
there will be disputes over inheritance and litigations. [*8*]
Moreover, if the parents have no property, the acquisition of
many children means so much hard work to bring them up. So
whether there is money or not in the family, to have children
means added suffering and privation to the parents, who are
therefore reluctant to have too many. Because of the prevalence
[165] of infanticide the rate of childbirth is decreasing. This and the
high mortality rate combine to endanger the growth of their
population.

5) *Disease*. Due to the difficulties of livelihood the Miao-I
164 cannot afford the facilities of health and sanitation. Their
hardihood enables them to survive the cold seasons of winter
and spring when little disease prevails. But summer and autumn
are the seasons of ill health. In case of sickness there are no
medical facilities in the Miao-I areas, and the patient is left
to the mercy of nature or magic. Sometimes a *mi-la* [diviner]
755 or a *kuei-shih* [shaman priest] is asked to propitiate the ghost.
Mi-la is also known as "mi-p'o," and *kuei-shih* as "tuan-kung."
The patient's family first asks the diviner to ascertain the kind
of evil spirit that is causing the trouble and the kind of animal
most appropriate for sacrifice. Then the wizard priest is asked

[8 cont.]
755 to perform the ritual. Collusion between the two is common,
and the ignorant people are made victims. These ghost affairs,
however, often have a psychological effect and little ailments
are sometimes healed this way. But in nine out of ten serious
cases death is the only outcome. Their superstition is so deep-
[753] rooted that they think all diseases are caused by spirits who have
to be appeased. Death is considered a destiny, and the living resign
[761] themselves to fate. Every year when diseases are prevalent in
all hsien areas in Kweichow, the diviners and the priests do a
thriving trade that unfortunately causes innumerable deaths.
What a pity!

6) Vices. Kweichow is an opium producing province. The
276 opium growers are the Miao-I, but they themselves detest this
drug, and those among them who smoke opium are extremely
rare. Even cigarette-smokers are few. But there is a kind of
tobacco, locally produced, which is favored by all. When they
are not at work, whether sitting down leisurely or walking in
the street, they would smoke unceasingly the pipe tobacco. They
273 are fond of wine; men and women, old and young, derive
pleasure from liquor and encourage each other to drink more,
their breath reeking of alcohol. There are two kinds of spirits;
a strong wine made from corn and mixed grains, and a white
wine distilled from glutinous rice. The quality of both is
mediocre and the taste ordinary, but they relish them with delight.

7) Recreation. The Miao-I in Kweichow are mostly farmers
517 who live apart in wild mountains and lone valleys under difficult
and strenuous circumstances. They work so hard [9] that if they
do not seek some kind of amusement, life would be entirely devoid
of pleasure. So all groups of Miao-I emphasize recreations,
which take place in between farming periods, such as the liu-sheng
[six-pipe bamboo wind instrument] dance, the flower
dance, market dance, moon dance, chasing the moon, sitting
in the moon, singing, yao-ma-lang [or kan-piao, love-making],
bull fight and horse racing. Among these the liu sheng dance,
[527] flower dance, market dance, bull fight and horse racing are held
periodically in a fixed location according to precedents. The

[9 cont.]

517 purpose of these festivities is to celebrate in advance a rich harvest, and therefore the participants are numerous, especially the young men and women, who go there in new and pretty clothes with the object of finding a mate. As to moon dance, sitting in the moon, singing or chasing the moon, these are occasions specially designed for love-making by the young. [533] Both men and women are good singers, and they sing to drown out the sorrows in their chest, as well as to effect a lover's union. Anyone who fails to sing at marriage and funeral ceremonies will surely be disgraced. Singing, in short, is a necessary accomplishment. Within a short distance from the village there [443] is a level ground for the market fair held once in every six days; this is the center of trade for the Miao-I. On such occasions people gather together at the fair, bustling, loitering and looking around, their heart full of joy and fun. It gives them a respite from their routine toil. Aside from this they are fond of music. [534] Their musical instruments include the liu-sheng, wu-sheng [five tube bamboo wind instrument, flutes, harmonicas, so-na [a clarinet type wind instrument], brass drums, and p'i-pa [lute]. The liu-sheng is the most common instrument; it is made of bamboo with a gradation of notes resembling that of a military band. Its tune is like the plaintive call of a bird but with a variation of notes. The music accompanies simple dance steps, out of which they derive much pleasure and satisfaction.

4. Ceremonies and Customs

1) Marriage. The various Miao-I ethnic groups in Kweichow 584 are rather complicated, but their marriage customs, though varying to a certain extent, are generally the same among different tribes. Marriages are either arranged by parents or the parties themselves, but mostly follow the will of the former and take the advice of the go-between. To negotiate marriage [10] they first discuss gifts and dowries. After marriage the bride goes back to her parents 591 until she is about to give birth to a son. She is then confined to her husband's house. In ancient times, this custom was first

[10 cont.]

591 practiced by one tribe and then followed by others for so long a
time that at last it was firmly established. There are only a few
587 couples who are separated. In such cases, they would participate
in moon dance, chasing the moon, yao-ma-lang or kan-piao,
and other such agencies of free love to seek their mate for a
second marriage.

584 [582] When a boy reaches the age of fourteen or fifteen the
parents usually negotiate marriage for him. First, a friend or a
relative is asked to approach a girl's family to propose marriage.
When the latter family approves, the go-between would bring
the boy and his parents over for an interview. If both sides are
satisfied, they then start negotiations of gifts and dowry and
make arrangements for the engagement. If one side is not satisfied
the matter is dropped. This refers to total strangers: between
those who are acquainted with each other such arrange-
583 ments are unnecessary. In the old days the gift and dowry were
given in terms of the number of cows instead of money. Recently,
they have been changed to silver pieces, and the larger
the amount, the more magnificent it is for the girl's family. If
the amount is small then the girl's status is considered low and it
becomes a disgrace to the family. When the question of the
bride price is settled (with the Hua Miao the highest gift comes
to $100 or more) the go-between appoints a date to convey it to
the girl's family. Accepting the gift, the family gives a feast,
in which friends and relatives are invited to keep the go-between
company and to regale him with meat and wine. This is the
engagement. Before the wedding day, the gift donation must be
fully paid up through the go-between; but if the girl's family is
fond of the future son-in-law, half or all the bride price may be
585 waived. On the wedding day the bridegroom's family sends along
a man and a woman to welcome the bride, and sometimes the
groom goes there himself. (But the groom must provide meat
and wine as a welcome home feast.) The bride's parents would
ask a few young girls to keep the bride company the night before,
and before daybreak the party would commence the wedding
march, the bride shaded under a bridal parasol. On arrival at
the groom's house, the members of the party have to leap across

[10 cont.]

585 a horse saddle to gain entrance through the gate. After the send-off party leaves, the bride's family immediately slaughters a pig or two, to carry to the groom's house as a send-off gift. That day friends and relatives float in like clouds to offer congratulations. The groom's family puts rice straw on the floor of the cow stall and spreads feasts to entertain the guests. Day or night they would not stop feasting until drunk. That night no one sleeps. The bride does not share the groom's room. The guests from the bride's family and the friends of the groom's family join in a song fest. The following day or the third day the bride returns home with her companions, and the host dispenses cash presents to all the members of the bridal party. The other guests stay on to partake of the farewell feast. After her 591 return the bride stays with her parents for a month or fortnight, and has to be welcomed back to her new home by her husband. But the girl's family would keep the son-in-law as a house guest for several days before sending the young couple away. After a short stay the bride goes back again to live with her mother, and only on New Year, at festivals and harvest times, would she accompany her husband home to stay for a few days as a guest of his family. It is only after the children are born that she lives permanently with him. One month after the birth of the first 852 child there would be a feast, and the wife's family [11] would 431 send along some baby clothes and, in case of a wealthy family, also cows and pigs. Those who have received cash gifts from the husband's family at the wedding would now give in return baby's bedding and clothing as well as chicken and duck eggs. Friends and relatives would each carry with him a sheng [a [804] measure equivalent to 31.6 cubic inches] of rice and a jug of wine to partake in a feast provided by the host, who would slaughter cattle or buy pork and beef from the market for the occasion.

2) Funeral. The funeral rituals of the various Miao-I •764 groups in Kweichow are more or less similar. Due to their [755] belief in spirits, they resort to wizardry for the expulsion of evil spirits in case of sickness, but they would never take any medicine with the result that nine out of ten cases of serious sickness end in death. A man who dies of old age is given funeral rites at

[11 cont.]
764 home, his body lying across the hall. When a Ch'ing Miao dies
his body is wrapped up in a straw mat and hung up with a rope
on a beam in the hall. For funerals performed outside the house,
they build a straw hut and place the body inside. The kinsmen
[292] wear hemp cloth or white cloth on the head in mourning and
cry aloud around the body. This is known as "hao-sang" [wailing
funeral]. Meanwhile the bereaved family would send messengers
to announce the sad news to friends and relatives in distant parts.
764 At night they put up a spirit tablet and invite a wizard priest [kuei-
787 shih] to "open the way" by means of a cock and a bamboo stick
slit into a magic diagram. The priest settles down in front of
the spirit tablet and calls the deceased by the name, informing
him of the story of genesis and urging him to start on his
journey. He too advises the dead how to overcome dangers and
obstacles, how to deal with difficulties, how to recognize cross
roads and to ferry across rivers and oceans, and so on until the
spirit world is reached. After the ritual of opening the road is
764 over, they slaughter a chicken and a piglet to spur the spirit on
782 his way. On the following day at the time of "k'ai-ch'ang"
[commencing the ceremony] (the Chinese call it "k'ai-tiao"),
a bull is bludgeoned as a gift to the dead. (Among the Hê Miao,
a bull is bludgeoned as a sacrifice to a man, and a horse as a
sacrifice to a woman.) At the time of bludgeoning the crowd
wails and cries to the tune of the liu-sheng. The bull is first led
around the straw pavilion three times and then handed over to the
priest, who calls out the name of the deceased and makes the
presentation before the spirit tablet. The animal is then led out to
be slaughtered. Relatives and friends who have come to make
sacrifices all have with them a sheng of rice, a pot of wine and
a basketful of cooked rice, pork and eggs. These are given to
the priest one by one, who in turn calls out to the deceased for a
formal offering. The bereaved family then cooks the beef and
after first offering it to the deceased, passes it around to the
guests. That night all keep the funeral vigil, and sing to each
other songs of piety in sad words and melancholic tunes to arouse
in those who hear them a feeling of sadness.

[11 cont.]

764 On the third day comes "fa-sang" [burial]. In former
times the body was wrapped in a straw mat, but now it is laid
[177] in a coffin. This is the result of Chinese influence and prac-
ticed by those who live near the Chinese. At the time of burial,
a small tree of about ten feet long is split in two, its bark
peeled off and the two ends tied with ropes. The corpse is then
placed on it and carried away on the shoulders. When the
procession leaves the house the filial son walks in front, followed
by the women mourners, whose long, show laments and plaintive
cries are too sad to hear. Arriving at a mountain spot they dig
the earth [12] to make a well, the four walls of which are lined
with stone slabs. Into the well the coffin is lowered. If the
body is wrapped in a straw mat, its two sides are left empty.
On the top of the well more stone slabs are laid and then some
earth. The tombs are all laid crosswise, hence the expression,
"hêng Miao, tao Ch'i-lao [crosswise Miao and upside down Ch'i-
lao]. After burial the guests all return to their respective homes.
766 The Miao are superstitiously prejudiced against repeat figures
777 in the age of the deceased, such as 22 or 33, believing that these
[801] figures would cause the dead to receive extra punishment in the
spirit world and at the same time bring bad luck to the family.
To overcome this mishap they jack up the coffin in some deep
mountain, without letting it touch the earth on the theory that
in so doing the spirit of the dead would not be admitted that
year to the spirit world. In similar instances the Ch'ing Miao,
whose dead is wrapped up in a straw mat, would hang the
corpse high up on some lofty cliff in some wild area without
letting it touch the earth to avoid damnation.

5. Culture

796 1) Religion. There is strictly no religion to speak of among
[771] the Miao-I in Kweichow. After living in the mountain village,
they have come to respect the forest behind it, which they call
[782] "hou lung" [back dragon] and once every spring they offer
sacrifice to the mountain forest. After the sacrifice they

[12 cont.] After the Sacrifice they
796 sometimes carve a pair of wooden images and plant them at the
[532] entrance of their village for protection. (This is the same as
the Chinese idea of building a temple for the earth god.)
Every year a new pair is added to receive sacrifice. Apart from
[782] this they bludgeon the pigs and bulls to offer to ancestral spirits,
[776] and regard with great awe, all good and evil spirits, such as the
[769] Thunder God, Household God, and Earth God. To them even a
[778] big tree or a strange rock is endowed with divine power. The
names of evil spirits are many. If a human being offends a
753 spirit he is liable to become sick, and the only remedy is to
ask a kuei-shih or a mi-p'o to the village to perform all kinds of
superstitious rites, known colloquially as "spirit affairs." Since
797 the reign of Kwang-hsu [1875-1907] in the Ch'ing Dynasty,
foreign Protestant and Catholic missionaries had come to
Kweichow to rent houses for dispensing medicine and preaching
the gospel. The Miao-I people were attracted by their kind
and dignified bearings and many were subsequently converted.
These preachers bought property where their congregation was the
largest and established schools with teachers instructing the people in the gospel. Today Shih-men-k'an at Wei-ning is the southwest headquarters of the Christian missions. There many Hua
Miao become sincere believers [13] and followers. The
[212] missionaries have also introduced a romanized form of Miao
language based on the English alphabet, which the Hua Miao learn
as the "Miao language."

2) Education. The Miao-I in Kweichow have no written
871 language, and therefore there is no education to speak of. In
childhood a Miao learns leisurely at home from the adult the
simple traditional ways of life. In adolescence he learns outside
the home what his natural intellect is capable of, accumulating
experiences days and months in an unconscious way without the
aid of education. Their knowledge being thus limited, they can
have no cultural progress and little improvement in the material
things of life. Since the last years of the Ch'ing Dynasty those
Miao who lived contiguous to the Chinese had asked the latter
to establish schools in their midst. Although the number of Miao
reading Chinese was on the increase, the whole system was

[13 cont.]

871 corrupt and did untold harm. Since the coming of the mission-
797 aries to the Miao area, churches and schools were established,
871 and those who were converted to the Christian religion were
given an education. Today there are quite a few Miao who
have received a higher education with the help of the church.
However, it is regrettable that under the influence of the
church, the religious element is too strong. In the 14th year
871 of the Republic [sic. It should probably be the 24th year of
648 the Republic, or 1935.] when Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek
as head of the government came to Kweichow, he saw with his
own eyes the low cultural level of the Miao-I and planned to
assimilate them through education. The next year the govern-
ment issued an order to encourage Miao-I education and ap-
propriated a large sum of money for the purpose. In the same
year the Provincial Rural Normal School was established at
Ch'ing-yen, but its students were not all children of the Miao-I,
sixty or seventy percent being Chinese who pretended to be
Miao-I. Again, in the 25th year of the Republic [1936] when
General Yang Sen was stationed at An-shun he promoted Miao
education through his army by establishing three elementary
schools with some good results. But not long afterwards his
troops were transferred to the front and his education program
was abandoned. Aside from these attempts, the provincial
872 government established an elementary school in each of the
648 twelve hsien at Kweiyang, Huang-p'ing, Li-po, T'ai-kung,
Wei-ning, An-nan, Kuan-ling, Tan-chiang, Shui-ch'eng, Ting-
fan, Lo-tien and Pa-chai, where the Miao-I congregate. In
other hsien areas there are short-term elementary schools that
also admit Miao-I children. The educational system for the
Miao-I in Kweichow is rudimentary at best and with the extensive
distribution of the Miao-I over a wide area the work is like
extinguishing a wagonful of burning fuel with a cup of water --
not at all effective or enough.

3) Occupations. The Miao-I people, being retarded in
241 cultural development, have just entered the stage of agricultural
community, and so their chief occupation is farming. [14]
Those Miao-I living in the northwest of the province have high

[14 cont.]

241 mountain terrain with poor soil, in which they can grow only
corn, buckwheat and mixed grains. They also rear cattle,
[231] horses, pigs, and principally sheep. At Wei-ning and Ta-ting,
where the territory is highly mountainous, the climate is cold,
and the population is thin; it is unfit for raising crops but best
fit for grazing. In the southeast the Miao-I areas are comparatively
better and suitable for rice cultivation. Besides
[[illegible]] agriculture they are also engaged in simple handicraft industries,
[286] such as home spinning and weaving. The commercial centers
443 of the Miao-I in all areas are the village fairs held during the
day for the bartering of goods. The fairs are located like a
network in some convenient spots in the cities, on a vacant lot,
or on the slope of a hill. They are named after certain cyclic
animals such as chicken, dog, cow and so on. At the time of
the fair men and women who come from all places number from
several hundred to several thousand. At the fair everyday
articles of household use are displayed in rows of adjoining straw
sheds. A fair is a scene of activity and gaiety. The villages in
778 which the Miao-I live are often endowed with rich resources, but
314 their belief in the earth as the dwelling place of the dragon spirit
316 forbids them to exploit its wealth, such as felling the trees for
784 timber and digging the mines for minerals. Hence their occupations
are limited and their culture is backward.

6. Conclusion

000 Having learned from the foregoing the actual conditions of the Miao-I societies in Kweichow, we can realize their precarious situation. Today, enemy hoofs have ravaged half of the country, while the Miao-I areas have risen in importance with the din of guns in our war of resistance. We cannot afford any longer to allow the Miao-I people, who are owners of their lands, to muddle through life in their primitive way of living. It is hoped that the government administration and leaders of the society will begin to pay attention to the Miao-I communities,

[14 cont.]

000 to consolidate them, to advance their civilization, to improve their living conditions, to plan for their welfare and to alleviate their sufferings. The eighth article in the Declaration of the Fifth National Convention [15] says: "All political policies should be made for the welfare and in the interest of the local inhabitants." It is also hoped that our Miao-I compatriots will realize our mutual racial interest in the face of enemy aggression. Only by rising and resisting the enemy will we be able to ensure our ultimate freedom.

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[16]

General Conditions of the Short-Skirt Hê Miao in Kweichow

Wu Che-Lin

1. Introduction

101 131 The Miao-I people in Kweichow occupy at least forty percent of the total population of the province. Except in the area north of the Wu River, where the population is entirely Chinese, the Miao-I are in a great majority in all rural communities farther away from the cities and larger villages, in which the Chinese mostly congregate. [161] But these 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 Miao-I people are different in languages, customs, and costumes as well as in cultural background. Therefore, their names (given them by the Chinese) total more than a hundred, such as the Ch'ing Miao, the Hê Miao, the Pê Miao, the Hung Miao, the Hua Miao, the Chang-ch'ün Miao, the Tuan-ch'ün Miao, the Ta-tieh Miao, the Ku-lan Miao, the Hua-ch'un Miao, the Chung-chia, the Sui-chia, the Tung-chia, the Ts'ai-chia, the Tung-chia, the Chi-tou, the Mu-lao, and so on. The Tuan-ch'ün

[16 cont.]
131 Miao [short-skirt Miao] is a branch of the Hê Miao, distributed
101 over a very extensive area in southeast Kweichow at Hsia-
chiang, Yung-chiang, Chien-ho T'ai-kung, Tan-chiang, Pa-
chai, Lu-shan and Ma-chiang. They total about 40,000 to
[161] 50,000 people. Although they have among them more or less
the same costumes, customs and language, their cultural levels
vary to a large extent. The present article deals only with those
Short-Skirt Hê Miao who are located in the region contiguous to
Lu-shan, Ma-chiang, Pa-chai and Tan-chiang, and may not be
representative of the entire group.

2. Costumes

101 [17] A common method to distinguish the various tribal
291 groups among the Miao in Kweichow is by the style of their
women's dresses, because the men's are generally similar to those
of the Chinese farmers. The women's costumes, however, still
retain their original native style. The so-called Ch'ing Miao
[blue Miao], Hê Miao [black Miao], and Pê Miao [white Miao]
are distinguished by the colors of their womenfolks' clothes,
which are either predominantly blue, black, or white. The
291 Short-skirt Miao is one group of the Hê Miao, their women's
clothes being uniformly black. They are called the Short-skirts
because their skirts are shorter than those worn by the other
groups. In fact, aside from the length of the skirt, the other
parts of their costumes are quite different too. To describe,
302 we start from the head. First of all, they never use make-up,
but their hair is always well-trimmed and shiny. They often
[515] wash their hair by the river bank and afterwards apply tea-seed
oil to give it a glossy finish. They comb their hair backwards
first and leave a bang of about two to three inches falling down
on the forehead in the shape of a small black umbrella. On the
crown the hair is coiled up in a chignon and fastened by a small
wooden comb three inches long, rather like the headgear of a
Japanese woman.

[17 cont.]

The upper garment of a Short-skirt Hê Miao woman is also
291 different from that of the other Miao. It resembles the mandarin
jacket of the Chinese, reaching only to the hips, round-collared
and buttoned in the middle, with large sleeves. Although there
are five to seven pairs of bean-size lead buttons, actually only
the first pair can be buttoned, the other pairs being loose, with
only buttons but no loops. So during work a belt is tied around
the waist. They do not wear panties. The skirt measures only
one foot and two inches in length and is not fastened to the
waist but below the waistline. It has inumerable pleats, from
over five hundred to as many as a thousand. Therefore a skirt
requires at least twenty feet of material. Both the front and
rear parts of the skirt are covered with a piece of black cloth
about six or seven inches in width and one or two inches longer
than the skirt. The rear piece has an embroidered band of
four inches at the hem. They never wear stockings. While
working at home, in the field or on the river bank they are always barefoot. On formal occasions they wind strips of black
cloth around their legs, from the ankles [18] up to the thighs.
Each strip of leg band measures about twenty-four feet, and as
it winds up layer on layer, it gives a swollen appearance. The
straw sandals for men and women are made differently. The
women's footwear resembles the Japanese wooden clogs, with a
forklike rope attachment that enters in between the big toe and
the rest of the toes, so that the rear and the back of the foot
require no other attachments.

The costumes described above are for everyday wear. The
[511] Miao in this area are comparatively well-to-do. An average
family is able to add a suit or two of new clothes for each
member every year, and so even their ordinary clothes are clean
and in good repair. Dirty and disorderly dresses are rarely seen.
On festive occasions the men wear new clothes and the women,
specially made embroidered clothes in brilliant designs. The
[294] work on the embroideries begins during a girl's teen-age and
continues for several years before it is completed. Ordinarily
301 the women do not use much jewelry. They do not wear earrings,
neither do they have holes in the ears. They do wear one or

[18 cont.]

301 two silver bracelets and two or three finger rings. But when they
put on their best embroidered clothes, then they would wear a
kind of silver headgear with different kinds of silver pins in the
chignon, and at least two or three solid silver necklaces, sometimes
as many as a dozen; the number of bracelets and finger
rings they wear is also doubled. They would have still more
silver jewelry on the dress or attached to the waist. The
[556] quantity of silver worn is an index to the wealth of the family,
and so during festivals the women become exhibits in every
family.

3. Marriage

584 Marriage among the Miao is mostly the result of love, but
the mediation of the match-maker and the engagement ceremony
are necessary before fixing the date of marriage. Young
men and women [19] at the "liu sheng [reed-wind instrument]
dance" in the first lunar month may openly fall in love with each
other without the intervention of parents or brothers of the
family. In ordinary times, especially during the holidays, they
may also court each other at will. So on the mountain slope or
in the field we often observe scenes of "yao-ma-lang" (i.e.,
love-making), when they sing songs to each other in questions
[593] and answers. One party would ask a question in a song, and if
the other party is willing she sings back the answer. These songs
are extemporized, full of freedom and naturalness. Such
serenades last till sunset when they begin to return home. After
a suitable period of time, if their feelings persist then the
parents would find a go-between to arrange the engagement.
836 This system of love and marriage seem very free, yet there is
no promiscuity. Their conduct is regulated by unwritten laws
and they all have a high sense of decency. For instance, *yao-ma-lang*
is carried on out of sight of old people, and yet it has
to be within sight of passers-by. Furthermore, men and women
must remain at least five feet apart, and necking and embracing
are taboo. (The Long-skirt Miao not far away from them permit

[19 cont.]

336 embracing.) So, pre-marital relations between men and women are rare if not altogether absent. The following are some of the love songs they sing to each other in free translation:

I

539

You seem not to care for me,
But with you I'm in love.
It is as keen as a dagger,
For you are too beautiful.

When I scale the mountain peak,
Day and night my thoughts wander,
Your image they continue to seek.
What magic have you yonder?

II

Ye maids who marriage have not known,
How many are there in your village?
One of you I wish to call my own
To share my route and tillage.
In the village we shall sit, you and I,
For shortly we shall be two genii.

III

In that village there are pretty flowers,
In that village there are pretty maids;
Their faces are like snow flakes on the bowers,
Their brows, a crescent moon that never fades.
Please, send me one to adore,
And I shall never ask for more.

IV

539 Now we sing together a mountain song,
Next year should our paths cross again,
You two as a married couple shall come along,
While I'll be alone in my loneliness.

V

Formerly, my lover you were,
Like water and jug, always there.
Only a little separation,
And another man is here!
Pray, where do I stand now?

VI

I wish to have a woman like you,
Snow-white, bright eyed too,
Healthy, precious like gold.
And, frankly, it may be told -

I want to take you home to my village,
And if you couldn't come within five days,
Surely, before you shall gladly die.

VII

I love you,
I love your clothes so clean,
I love your teeth, silver rimmed,
And your voices, mild and pleasing.

VIII

The wind sweeps through the rice field,
Calmly, leisurely, one washes sand in the waves,

[20 cont.]

539 Little sister thinking of her boy -
In pain;
Big brother thinking of his girl -
Nonchalantly.

IX

After breakfast a cliff we climb,
We throw leaves down the sand-bank,
Fishes are dead, big and small --
Without lover, 'tis never all.

X

The ants climbing a tree do not fear its height,
When you woo a maiden, you fear not another's
might.
In love you should not be afraid of death,
Distant Yunnan is so near if you must measure
your sword.

584 The engagement procedure is rather simple, and no exchange of "eight characters" [indicating the year, month, day and hour of the birth of betrothed persons] or selection of a lucky date is required. After the approval of the parents, the go-583 between may formally make arrangements, first bringing over 584 the dowry in the form of a "chao-tai" [visiting belt?] to the boy's home. The return gift from the boy's family, which must now be agreed upon, averages from ten to forty dollars in cash. The boy's family further sends through the go-between a flower patterned cloth parasol for deposit in the girl's family and for use by the future bride when she goes to the husband's house at the time of the wedding. On the day of the engagement the boy's family may not provide a feast, but has to despatch three or four young men carrying to the girl's family wine, glutinous rice, chickens and ducks as well as $3.60, known as "niece's cash." (According to the Miao custom a girl should marry a

[20 cont.] (According to the Miao custom a girl should marry a
583 cousin on the mother's side, and if she is to marry somebody
584 else, she has to give money to her maternal uncle. This money
[582] is called "niece's cash.") The girl's family would then give a
feast in honor of the go-between and invite other guests to keep
him company.

585 [21] Marriages generally take place during the winter harvest in the second lunar month or the autumn harvest in the tenth lunar month. At that time the groom's family will again despatch three or four young men to the bride's family, carrying nine catties of pork, a package of glutinous rice weighing about two or three catties together with the cash gift negotiated at the time of the engagement. Announcement will also be made of the date for receiving the bride (about twenty days away on a horse day or a cow day). The return gift from the girl's family at the time consists only of a package of glutinous rice and a duck. But on the wedding day the bride's family has to despatch two men early in the morning to send over to the groom's family a slaughtered pig of about fifty to sixty catties and two big baskets, approximately four pecks, of glutinous rice to herald the arrival of the bride. At the wedding march the bride is arrayed in a flowered dress, holding in her hand the flowered parasol, sent previously by the groom's family, and accompanied by eleven male and female relatives. But halfway six of them must retract their steps because grown-up girls may not visit the groom. Among the other five, one young woman acts as the bride's maid and always keeps her company. The groom's family also despatches men to carry wine and rice to meet the bridal party halfway. When the two groups meet they picnic in the field. After this the bride and her kinsmen are conducted to the groom's family.

The bridal chamber is not so well decorated as that of the
[352] Chinese, and the furniture in the room is simple and plain.
Except for one or two chests of drawers for the bride's clothes
which come as a part of the dowry, the rest is provided by the
groom and consists of a bed, a few stools, a wooden face-basin
and a foot-basin. Quilts, pillows and mat are also provided by
the groom's family. That day the celebration consists of singing

[21 cont.]

585 and drinking, which lasts throughout the night, neither hosts nor
guests retiring. That night, the bride and groom do not share
the room together. When tired the bride may lie down with the
groom's younger sister. The next day the bride and her kinsmen
return to her home. After three more days the bride is re-escorted to her husband's family by her brothers and male cousins.
After a few days' stay she returns once more to her parents.
Thus the wedding ceremony officially terminates. Later, every
591 time the husband wants his wife back he has to send over two or
three sheng of glutinous rice to her family, and she will then
come back with an escort of her kinsmen. Each year from the
second to the eighth lunar month when farm work in her husband's family requires the help of the wife, she often goes over
[22] but only for a few days as a guest without participating in
housecleaning and cooking. Not until she becomes pregnant
does the wife begin normal living with her husband to assume
the responsibilities of the mistress of the household. This custom probably is a vestige of the transition from a maternal to a
paternal society. In a maternal society the married woman does
not leave her parents after marriage. The fact that the Miao
woman does not stay with her husband before his child is born
is probably due to this tradition. The paternal society lays
much emphasis upon offsprings: only those women capable
of procreation are considered good wives. The marriage before
589 conception, from the point of view of having heirs, is only
591 experimental. Therefore the wife cannot enjoy all her rights
and privileges, and at the same time she may not assume the
responsibilities associated with them. The result is a sort of
quasi-marriage, that is, marriage in fact but not in form.

There are a small number of pre-arranged marriages
586 [584] among the Short-skirt Hê Miao, negotiated by parents when the
parties concerned are mere children. In such a marriage the
bride often refuses to go back to her husband's family soon after
returning to her own. This kind of girl is allowed to marry again
on the condition that her second husband pays indemnity to the
first one for expenses which the latter may incur in another

[22 cont.]
586 marriage. The amount of indemnity varies from under one hundred to several hundred dollars, fixed and guaranteed by relatives of both families at the time of negotiation to avoid future complications. Of course, this kind of divorce is not only limited to pre-arranged marriages by parents, the fact is that even in marriages of love, separations often occur due to incompatibility and difference of opinions. But whenever children are born within the wedlock, divorces never occur.

768 587 [589] There are very few cases of young widowhood among the Miao-I. According to customs a young widow may return to her own family six months after the death of her husband. Among the neighboring Long-skirt Miao the wife may go out through the back door to "yao-ma lang" with another man hardly before her husband breathes his last on the deathbed. The children of the deceased father generally remain in his family to be looked after by the grandparents, but the widow may bring them along to her own family if her deceased husband's family is poor and unable to support them. [23] At the same time the widow's parents may proceed to find another husband for their daughter. After marriage the second husband has to pay $4.20 to the wife's family, from which $1.20 is given to the deceased husband's family as "incense money" for sacrifices to his spirit. At the wedding the bride is escorted on foot by two old women to her husband's house, where feasts may be given and the occasion celebrated if his family is well-to-do.

582 Of course, the Miao also have certain taboos in their marriage system. Between sisters and brothers, between cousins and, like the Chinese, between parties of the same surname, no marriage takes place. Sometimes certain families are not matched with others although their surnames are different. For instance, the Yang family at P'ing-chai in the Chou-ch'i district in Lu-shan never have marital relations with the Pan family across the river at Hsin-chai. Between the Chinese and the Miao there are also very few instances of intermarriage. In the country the Miao, who consist of the majority of the population, maintain the most friendly relations in utter social equality

[23 cont.]

582 with the Chinese who live among them. Many of the Chinese speak the Miao language and are even influenced by the Miao in certain habits and customs, but intermarriages are extremely rare. Actually this is not only true of the Miao and the Chinese, but also of the different Miao groups. For instance at Chou-ch'i in the Lu-shan area there are 4,000 Short-skirt Hê Miao, about 200 to 300 Chinese, and less than 100 Mu-lao Miao. For marriage, these few Mu-lao Miao have to seek contacts in other Mu-lao villages very far away and never for a moment would they think of intermarrying the Short-skirt Hê Miao on the spot.

4. Funeral

When a Short-skirt Hê Miao dies his family decides on a 764 [777] lucky day to invite three or four relatives to specially wail aloud for him. The corpse is placed on a temporary scaffold about five feet from the ground on the left side of the hall and covered with sheets of coarse native cloth of about six feet long and two feet wide. The married daughters as a rule each present a sheet. [24] The unmarried daughters at home also collectively present one, though in some rich families everyone gives a sheet. These different colored sheets are used to line the coffin at the time of interment. When the corpse is being moved out of the house, the family members all wear hemp cloth on their heads and weep aloud around the body. At the [202] same time they despatch messengers to announce the bereavement to relatives living far away. In case the deceased is a man, they fire hunting rifles at the gate, or in the case of a woman, firecrackers so that those relatives within earshot may be apprised. The little table in front of the corpse is complete with spirit tablet, incense and candles, four bowls of glutinous rice, twelve cups of wine, a pig's heart and stomach, and other offerings. A priest is engaged to "open the way." He wields a dagger and a bunch of straw, uttering magic words and brandishing, at the same time, the dagger and straw, in an effort to drive away evil spirits that may obstruct the way.

[24 cont.]

764 All night they beat drums and play liu-sheng (6-reed wind instrument). The following day is the day of mourning when friends and relatives bring along different kinds of gifts as expressions of condolence. Some would bring a basketful of glutinous rice; some, a jug of wine; others, firecrackers, candles, incense and paper money. The host would slaughter a buffalo or a horse to feed the mourners. At the same time he has to kill a male dog [775] so that in the nether world the dog can watch the buffalo or the horse. The four legs of the animal are divided among the married children of the family and close relatives, distant relations being given only other parts of the meat. When there are not many relatives, each can bring home a piece of meat weighing about three or four catties. On the third day the corpse is lowered into the coffin after being clothed in four, six or eight black garments as well as shoes and socks. The number of sheets on which the corpse lies depends upon the number of children of the deceased. In case the deceased is childless, he is wrapped only in one sheet. There are three kinds of coffins: the rich use two coffins, the inner and the outer. Ordinary families use the outer coffin; the poor use the inner coffin, also known as the "fire box." The inner and the outer coffins are finished with black paint, but the "fire box" is made of plain wood. All coffins have their fixed dimensions. The inner coffin is one inch thick, five feet two inches long [sic], one foot and two inches wide at the feet and one foot three inches wide at the head. The outer coffin is one foot eight inches thick at the head, nine inches thick at the feet for the upper board, and eight inches thick for the bottom board, the total length being five feet eight inches, the width at the feet being one foot five inches, and the width at the head, two feet. The Miao have the strongest ob- [823] jection to the presence of iron or [25] copper in the coffin. At the time of burial the family members have to make a last minute inspection for fear some one might slip into the coffin some metal pieces. They believe that "to bury the dead with iron and copper will cause annihilation to the whole family."

As soon as a corpse is laid in a coffin, the burial takes place. This is called "fu-shan" [supporting the mountain]. The larger

[25 cont.]

784 coffins are borne by sixteen persons and the smaller ones, by eight. The son-in-law of the deceased leads the funeral procession with a lighted bark of fir tree, followed by the daughter-in-law, carrying on her back three sheng of grains in a basket. There are drummers, liu sheng players, and men who fire rifles and firecrackers. On such a solemn occasion, of course, the priest is not missing. Wielding a dagger in his left hand and holding an empty water bucket in his right, he walks along, abandoning the bucket as soon as he passes the village gate. As he moves along he swings the dagger and mumbles magic phrases. The coffin is followed by family members and friends and relatives, the latter each sending a package of glutinous rice to be taken along it is said, by the deceased to the nether world for distribution among those kinsmen already gone before. After burial the bereaved family mixes all the rice together and distributes it among the guests, the family itself being forbidden to eat this rice. When the burial ceremony is completed they return to the bereaved family, where they set up the spirit tablet for the deceased. The priest lays his dagger on the left of the tablet. At that time, the bereaved family has to provide wine and meat to feed the guests and after the meal they take their leave. For his three days of performance the priest re-
[465] ceives as reward a basketful of glutinous rice, a pig's heart, a pig's stomach and a jug of wine.

Three days after burial, the family of the deceased returns
765 to the tomb to offer sacrifices known as "fu-shan" [going back to the mountain]. The spirit tablet in the house has to be guarded by the elder son for about a month in the case of either deceased parent. During this month he is not supposed to cross the threshold or a bridge, nor to step into a puddle of water, nor to sing songs, nor to eat bamboo or bracken. After the period of spirit-guarding is over, the family has to send a package of glutinous rice of about two or three sheng and a cock to the house of the maternal uncle. Within three years after the burial regular sacrifices must be made at the tomb at every spring festival (twenty-five days after the beginning of spring) [in early March], after which "kua ch'ing" [hanging the green] [26] at Ch'ing-ming time [about April 5th] would be quite enough.

[26 cont.]

000 time [about April 5th] would be quite enough.

766 164 757 Hê Miao who die of leprosy are cremated. The dead body is carried to a vacant lot to be placed on a pile of firewood and burned before the public. It is probably for the same purpose of avoiding contagion that the Hê Miao at Yung-chiang who die of small pox are cremated -- a sanitary idea derived from experiences.

5. Religious Beliefs

774 776 The Short-skirt Hê Miao apparently believe in animism. In their view every object in nature is invested with a spirit. The sky, earth, sun and moon are all nature spirits, but even rocks, rivers, bridges, trees and wells are also endowed with spiritual powers. The duties and responsibilities of these spirits, however, are not quite divided, and therefore in case of sickness, engagement and the acquisition of sons they would go to one of these objects to offer prayers, and if their prayers are fulfilled they would have to offer sacrifices. There are two kinds of spirits: the good spirits, efficacious and powerful, who guard over the welfare of the mortals, but in case of offences against them, can also inflict severe punishments; the bad spirits or ghosts, who are bent on doing harm and whom one has to suppress if one cannot put up with them. The first category of spirits includes the Jade Emperor, the Guarding Buddha, one's ancestors, the King of Hades, the Earth God, the God of Wealth, the Bodhisattva of Mercy, Yo Fei [warrior hero of the 12th century], Shen-nung [Divine Husbandman, a mythical emperor of pre-historical times], Kwan-ti [warrior hero of the 3rd century, sometimes called the God of War], tree spirits, cliff spirits, bridge spirits, the Sun God, the Moon-Goddess, the winnowing-fan spirits, and the Lady Buddhas. The second category includes the spirits of thunder and lightning, the tiger ghost, the well ghost, the drowning ghost, the mouth odor ghost, the sly ghost who hurts people surreptitiously, the pu-nung (Miao dialect) ghost, the nai-huang (Miao dialect) ghost, the leg-pulling ghost, the breath-obstructing ghost, the soul-bewitching

[26 cont.]
774 ghost, the sand-throwing ghost [27], the shadow ghost, the half-
776 way ghost, the ghost of pestilence, the soul-infatuating ghost,
the passing ghost, the four-path Buddha-ghost, the idle ghost,
the short-legged ghost and the wall ghost. Among all these ghosts
the thunder spirit and the tiger ghost are the most wicked and the
most awesome. This belief is evidently influenced by geographic
environments. Living in high precipitous mountains under primi-
tive conditions, these people cannot help being struck with fear
each time thunder roars and lightning flashes. Furthermore, in
the thick and deep forests, fierce animals inspire additional awe
in them. All these objects being so terrible in their physical
form; their spirit form must be even more mysterious and
frightening. Another point worthy of notice is the fact that the
777 gods they worship are greatly influenced by the Chinese. For
776 instance, the Jade Emperor, the Bodhisattva of Mercy, Kwan-ti
and Yo Fei are not native gods of the Hê Miao. The tablet of
Shen-nung erected by farmers next to their ancestral tablets, the
God of Wealth worshipped by merchants, Lo Pan [a clever artisan
of the spring and autumn period] worshipped by artisans, T'ai-shang
lao-chün [title of Laotzu, here considered as a supreme Taoist
god] worshipped by blacksmiths, Lei-tsu [traditionally, wife of
the yellow emperor and originator of sericulture] worshipped by
weavers -- all these come from Chinese sources.

756 In their intercourse with the spirits they need a medium,
who is the shaman or wizard. The position of the priest among
the Short-skirt Hê Miao is not hereditary, and politically and
socially it does not command any special respect and authority.
Anyone who feels that a spirit has seized hold of him becomes
spiritually possessed and may proclaim himself a shaman. After
this proclamation he would be professionally approached. There
is no limitation of age for the priest. Some women too assume
the role of a shaman, but they are comparatively rare. An
ordinary village would have at least one priest, and a larger
village, two or three. The duties of a priest may be enumerated
as follows:

755
756 1) To attend to sickness. In the eyes of primitive peoples,

[27 cont.]

756 all diseases are caused by evil spirits, and to expel them is to
755 rid oneself of the diseases. In case of slight indisposition one's family members would burn incense and paper to drive away the wild ghost. But in case of serious sickness [28] the evil workings of an important ghost are presumed and it is necessary to get hold of a priest to slaughter an animal and to employ magic in order to achieve the desired end.

756 2) To pray for a son. If man is without a child at the age of forty-three or forty-four he can ask a priest to appeal to the
842 Jade Emperor for a son (the Miao do not believe in the Son-awarding Bodhisattva), or to enter the mountain to pray to a huge rock, the spirit of which is said to be able to award a child. So, in the second and the tenth month, incense is burned continuously to the rock spirit. At the time of worship two bowls of glutinous rice, five or six sticks of red incense, eight to sixteen fish as well as candles and paper money are used.

3) To arrest the soul. If a person is pale, thin and
756 dispirited or overtaken by serious sickness without being able to
774 get up, the conclusion is that it is an omen of the impending
[787] departure of the soul. A priest is engaged to appear before Yen-wang (the king of Hades) to arrest the soul and bring it back. In so doing, it is necessary to slaughter a pig for sacrifice before Yen-wang. After the soul is arrested all the relatives contribute from ten or twenty cents to a dollar or two toward a fund for the making of a necklace or a bracelet, called respectively the life-preserving chain or the hundred-family lock, for wear by the stricken person. At the same time a string of bamboo rings is hung crosswise at the gate together with a piece of charm to indicate that the soul is locked in and prevented from escaping again. Sometimes, a bad harvest is also attributed to the disappearance of the soul, and the priest is asked to slaughter a duck to summon it back.

756 4) To arrest the ghost. In cooking rice, when the pan
[787] shrieks, or when the bucket in which the rice is steamed issues a shrilling sound, it indicates the presence of a ghost. The priest is asked to slaughter a cow for sacrifice, because this ghost is the thunder demon, the greatest of all ghosts, and to

[28 cont.]
756 appease him a whole cow has to be sacrificed.

5) To rectify an injustice. If A has received injustice in
754 the hands of B and is so oppressed that he has no means of appeal,
627 he may ask a priest to present a petition in the nether world.
The priest can invoke a kind of "calamity ghost" to visit B, and if the latter is still ruthless and stubborn, this ghost can bring about death to all the members of his family, including the animals. To enlist the help of the "calamity ghost," it is necessary to give him a big crab, several river worms, a cock, and a male dog. The dog may be killed, but the cock may not be killed -- it can only be cursed to death by the priest. The crab and the river worms are put in a jar to be buried far away, [29] even in the bottom of a river, to prevent others from digging it up. It is said that in two or three days calamity is sure to befall B's family. If the latter knows about this, a priest should immediately be engaged to divine from the magic diagrams. Only when the buried items are unearthed can the calamity be averted.

6) To prolong life. A priest can tell whether a person's
761 life will be short-lived and he can apply for an extension for
782 him. In the process the priest has to slaughter a male pig and
756 proceed before Yen-wang to beg for more life for the applicant.
When this is granted, another pig is slaughtered to be sacrificed together with wine, glutinous rice and a carp as an expression of gratitude to Yen-wang.

7) To tell fortune. When someone does not know how to
787 act in times of crisis, a priest is asked to make a decision.
756 Important matters such as choosing a trade or a profession, and
trifles such as selecting materials for a garment, all require the decision of the priest, who will attempt to put the inquirer's mind in place. The average person respects the words of the priest. Sometimes when the priest decides that it will be very unlucky for a certain person to leave the village, that person may spend the rest of his life at home without going outside the village gate.

756 8) To protect children. Many families whose children
751 are susceptible to frequent illness would ask the priest to be their

[29 cont.]

751 "guardian" for the purpose of getting protection. This is be-
756 cause the body of the priest is supposed to be endowed with a spiritual quality that can put the ghosts in their places. Therefore, children receiving his guardianship can avoid illness. Often a priest may have several hundred people under his protection. To apply for it the protégé has to present a pair of shoes, a handkerchief, a cock and some glutinous rice to the
[553] guiding spirit of the priest, after which offering the protégé is given a new name.

Priesthood among the Short-skirt Hê Miao is not a profes-
756 sion, the shaman being a full-time farmer, carpenter or blacksmith. It is only a side-line. Each time the priest performs some service, his remuneration consists of a few insignificant "lucky" items. It is said that priesthood is not a willing choice. Every priest has at least twenty to thirty different spirits seeking his mediumship, and if he refuses the spirits would derange his mind. So once seized by the spirits a man cannot help being a priest. He then cuts a piece of red paper into a row of human forms [30] and pastes them before his ancestral altar. A board is nailed horizontally against the wall, on which two or three tea cups are placed. After each magic performance, the head of
[782] the cow, pig, or dog used in the ritual must be brought home to be sacrificed before the altar. But chickens and ducks used for the same purpose need not be brought home.

The capability of the shamans varies. Some can only catch small or wild ghosts but are unable to subdue big and fierce ghosts, who only surrender to priests with greater supernatural powers. Therefore, priests are divided into several classes. While performing magic, the priest may be assisted by a t'ung-shih [instructor] who is a less spiritually gifted person. The latter can only assist the priest but cannot engage the ghosts alone, and so his remuneration is still less. He may be fed for the services rendered without extra rewards.

[30 cont.]

6. General Living Conditions

511 Due to limited space we cannot discuss all the phases of their living conditions. In sum, the Short-skirt Hê Miao are still passing through a phase of village economy. The necessities of life, except salt which is obtained from the Chinese, are all produced in the village. The area they occupy is quite fertile. Not long ago they produced a great deal of opium though they themselves are rarely addicted to it. They are, however, surrounded on four sides by the Chinese, and an extension of their cultivated acreage is therefore practically impossible. But their population has greatly increased in the course of centuries and in proportion the per family acreage under cultivation has greatly decreased. Although some few of them may be large landowners, the majority of the Hê Miao can maintain only the barest economic subsistence. Their continuous toil all year round yields merely a pittance, barely enough to ward off starvation. This kind of rigid economy [31] [161] together with the prevalence of smallpox increases the rate of mortality in recent years to such an extent that it follows closely the maximum birthrate, and thus manages to bring their population rate to a standstill: more people are being born, but more also are dying.

[212] They have no written language, their knowledge is limited, and their living standard is far below the standard of modern life. 648 Because of the backwardness of their civilization they are held in contempt by the Chinese. Due to repeated conflicts in the past between the Chinese and the Miao-I, a great deal of misunderstanding, suspicion and prejudice still exists between the two groups. Fortunately, there are no unified spoken language customs and habits among the various Miao-I groups, and so among their many millions of people there is yet no apparent consolidation of a minority group movement to oppose the 000 Chinese. If our government authorities can undertake the development of their educational standards on the one hand and the elimination of misunderstanding and racial prejudices on the

[31 cont.]

000 other, then the many millions of Miao-I people can be made into a powerful new force to assume special responsibilities in the war of defense and national reconstruction.

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[77]

The Life of Women among the Sui-chia

Wu Che-lin

1. Introduction

M S 101 184 There is no doubt that Kweichow is the center of the Miao-I people. As to the exact number of these people estimates vary from 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 to as high as 5,000,000 or 6,000,000. The final figure probably has to await the outcome of a more accurate census in the future. Among these many million people the spoken languages, customs, styles of clothing, and cultures in general are markedly different. They themselves recognize these differences although they all belong to the same Miao ethnic group. Because of the differences in their costumes and locations the Chinese call them by different names. Currently, there are more than a hundred groups of them, such as the Hê Miao, the Ch'ing Miao the Pê Miao, the Hua Miao, the Chang-ch'ün Miao, the Tuan-ch'ün Miao, the Sheng Miao, the Kao-pu Miao, the Chung-chia, the Tung-chia, the Chen-chia, the Sui-chia, the Ch'i-tou and the Mu-lao. There is a central area in the distribution of each Miao group. From the point of view of anthropology and linguistics they may be classified in the same ethnic group, but judged by their living conditions they have marked differences. The following is a brief account of the life of women among the Sui-chia.

[77 cont.]

181 The center of the Sui-chia people is in southeastern
161 Kweichow, especially at Li-po, Tu-chiang, San-ho and Tu-
shan, where they are the most numerous and total 40,000 to
50,000. According to their story the area where they are
173 located once belonged to the Miao and the Man. Later, there
was a contest of strength between two kings, the pointed-head
king and the level-head king. The latter won and took with him
the ancestors of the Sui-chia to Li-po. After the pointed-head
king lost the contest, he scattered nettle [78] seeds around the
Sui-chia area, and as the nettles grew tall, they blocked all the
egresses from this area. Without a route of retreat, the Sui-
chia had to stay on and gradually drove away or otherwise ex-
terminated the Miao and Man. At the same time they re-
claimed the land, and occupied the territory they have today.

2. The Everyday Life of the Women

184 The average daily life of the women is generally the
same among ethnic groups of similar cultural development. A
few special characteristics, however, stand out in each group,
and this is also true of the Sui-chia. In costumes the male
291 Sui-chia are not greatly different from the Chinese in rural
communities, but those of the women are altogether dissimilar.
302 As far as the hair is concerned, a girl under ten years old looks
exactly like a boy, i.e., with the head shaved; but after ten
years old a girl begins to wear a braid. After marriage her long
hair is combed forward first, then from left to right until it rolls
on the top and is fastened with a wooden comb to prevent it from
falling. Like women of other ethnic groups they look upon their
hair-do as an important part of their appearance. Once every
[515] month or a fortnight they wash their hair in a basin of warm
water, to which is added a spoonful of lard to make the hair
glossy after washing. At the time of her wedding (as well as at
the races every year in the ninth month) the bride combs her
[301] hair into a chignon resting on the crown with different kinds of

[78 cont.]

301 silver flowers stuck on the sides and a silver-gilded comb at the 302 rear. The size of the earrings varies, the largest being an inch and a half in diameter. Recently, the custom of wearing earrings is not so widespread as formerly. The Sui-chia women, like the Short-skirt Hê Miao, do not have make-up but retain their natural charm.

The clothes of the Sui-chia are either blue or black. 291 There is no collar on the upper garment. On the right lapel, as well as along the borders and on the sleeves, are stitched two strips of hems [79] and one strip of embroidery. The two hems are black; the outer hem is about two inches in width and the inner hem about three-tenths of an inch, the two being two-tenths or three-tenths of an inch apart. The embroidered strip is made of green threads about one or one and one half [439] inches in width; it is manufactured by the Chinese and on sale at every market fair. The upper garment extends to the knee and the sleeves to the wrists. The cuff measures 8 inches. Ordinarily, the Sui-chia women wear trousers but no skirts. The trousers, which are entirely black, reach down to the ankles, and measure 8 inches at the cuffs. The hems on the trousers are the same as those on the upper garment. The waist is secured by an apron of plain, untrimmed black cloth, about 2 feet in width and 6 inches below the knees. As a rule the women are barefooted, but sometimes they wear straw sandals. In the winter or on occasions when they appear as guests they wear white stockings and black shoes, which point upward at the front like eagles' beaks. The shoes are finely embroidered with silk threads. This requires a great deal of time, and an [294] average girl makes one pair of such shoes a year.

Their economic life, as reflected in their food and drinks, 262 252 is on a very low level. The staple food of the Sui-chia is rice, then corn, buckwheat and millet. Rice accounts for only one-third of the food of a poor family, the balance being made up in mixed grains. Their vegetables consist of the following varieties: 1) sour-soup vegetable. Every year in the sixth and seventh lunar months, when the tomatoes are ripe, they are washed with water and dipped into some weak wine and kept in

[79 cont.]
262 an earthen jar. After a certain period the wine becomes sour and
252 is called "sour soup." Everyday vegetables, such as cabbage, radish or spinach, are cooked with this sour soup. This vegetable dish is never absent from the tables of either poor or rich families.
[251] 2) Pickled vegetable. Stalks and leaves of cabbages are first washed and dried, then cut into shreds, mixed with salt and wine, and sealed in an earthen jar. After a month or two it becomes sour, and when seasoned with some spice, it is very palatable. 3) Buckwheat-ash vegetable. Buckwheat stalks are first burnt into ashes, then wrapped in a piece of cloth, and distilled with water. This is called buckwheat-ash water. After being mixed with rice and beans, and well cooked, it is cooled off and stored in a sealed jar. Two days later it may be eaten. It is sour and appetizing and is said to help digestion. But it has to be eaten cold as it doesn't taste good when hot. 4) Taro. After being washed, the taro is ground with water into a paste [80] to which is added some buckwheat-ash water. When cooked it congeals into lumps, and because it resembles beancurd, it is called taro beancurd. It may be eaten by adding sour water to it, and has a fine taste when sautéd with meat shreds.

The Sui-chia, of course, have more vegetables than those
262 described above, but they are the most common ones found in every household. From this it may be seen that their year-round
[146] diet lacks nutrition and their taste is rather simple. Except on festive occasions such as Ch'ing-ming [about Easter time], Tuan-yang [the 5th of the 5th lunar month] and the New Year, or at special gatherings, meat is seldom served. Men are often
264 invited out as guests, and meat is served at parties together with
574 wine. Women, however, have fewer occasions to be guests,
562 and even when they are invited they are considered unimportant guests and poorly received. They are often offered sour soup with noodles as a special dish. If there are male guests in the house, only male members of the family sit at the table, the women taking no part at all. If the male guests are polite and considerate they would pick up some meat from the table and put it in a separate dish to be sent to the rear of the house for the hostess. But this is rather rare.

[80 cont.]

462 Among people of a comparatively low culture, women
572 are usually the hard workers. A Sui-chia woman starts the day's work by groping around to do house chores even before dawn. In the early morning calm, her first job is to hull rice, after which, before daylight climbs up the eastern sky, she has to carry water in buckets from the river or well. She does this chore year round, regardless of rain or storm. After water-carrying, her next job is to start a fire for cooking as well as for housecleaning. After breakfast she goes down the field like any man to help in farming or herding animals. During the slack agricultural season or on rainy days, the man may take a rest but the woman has other household duties awaiting her. Sewing and weaving for her mother-in-law, her husband, her children as well as for herself requires a great deal of time. In the evening she has to prepare supper, after which there are evening duties [81] that will keep her occupied till midnight when she retires. Her living, which is miserable enough, is further made worse by malnutrition and insufficient sleep. But in the midst of this suffering she takes things for granted and becomes insensible to pains.

4. Marriage

584 It is generally presumed that the Miao-I people have considerable freedom in marriage. While it is true that a large number of the Hê Miao, Hua Miao and Ch'ing Miao are united through love, marriages among the Sui-chia are all contracted by parents, the party themselves having absolutely no opportunity of choosing his or her life mate. Although they do not observe the etiquette that "men and women, in giving and taking things, should not touch hands," nevertheless, all boy-girl relations are under the close surveillance of father and elder brother. Unmarried women going out as guests and going to a fair are always accompanied by elders of the family. Therefore, it is practically impossible for the Sui-chia to "yao-ma-lang" (to make love) as the other Miao-I people. If a woman is found
[684] truly in love with another man, she would be whipped by her

[81 cont.]
584 father or elder brother, and frowned upon by the public. If she
[684] is already engaged, then the groom's family is entitled to
annul the marital contract.

To a Sui-chia woman marriage marks a dividing line in
883 her life. Before her marriage there is complete reliance on
her parents, and her share in household chores is limited to light
duties whenever it pleases her to do them, there being no strict
supervision by the elders. The idea is that a girl is not permanently
attached to her parents' home, and sooner or later she
will have to be married out when she will begin to work strenuously
in her new home. This is one reason why as a girl she assumes
no responsibility for household affairs. Another reason is that
883 after the engagement the ability of the would-be bride is judged
584 alone by her embroidery work. [82] In order to maintain
294 respect, the girl's family has to direct her to such female employments
as spinning, weaving and embroidery. Young girls
for the most part find themselves absorbed in these pre-marital
preparations. Shoes for men, embroidered shoes for women,
pillow cases, quilt cases and socks and stockings have to be all
made in her own home; otherwise after her marriage she would
not have enough to go around. Thus, before marriage she has
no time to participate actively in heavy household duties.

The groom's family takes an active part in marriages
584 among the Sui-chia. When the boy's parents are pleased with a
girl of a certain family, they will immediately present gifts such
as cakes, brown suger, and ham, as well as necklaces and other
jewelry through a go-between. The girl's parents may not say
"yes" the first time the go-between comes with the gifts even
though they may be willing to have the match, but they will
contrive to refuse under all plausible excuses, such as "the
girl is too young yet: after a few years we may consider this
proposition," or "the girl is too stupid: it is feared that she may
handicap the career of the boy." The go-between is entertained
at a meal, but the gifts she leaves behind will be returned to the
boy's family after a few days. A few days or sometimes a month
later the boy's family may still renew the offer by asking the
go-between to send over the presents to beg once more the favor
of a marriage contract. Regardless of their real intentions, the

[82 cont.]

584 girl's parents will keep the presents for a few days and then send them back again as before. This kind of gesture may be exchanged four or five times, and finally if the girl's parents agree to a match they will finally keep the presents to indicate the acceptance of the marriage relationship. The boy's family would then ask a few friends and relatives to accompany the go-between to make a formal call upon the girl's parents, who would entertain the visitors with a feast. After this occasion, although there is no formal marriage contract, society recognizes their relationship as a fait accompli.

For the formal engagement the boy's parents must select a lucky day and together with five or six male or female relatives pay a visit to the girl's parents with gifts such as sugar, meat and silver necklace. The girl's parents must slaughter a piglet [825] or a chicken but never a goose or duck (because its flat beak and cackling noise may cause a breakup of the engagement), and prepare a feast for the visitors as well as the neighbors and friends of their own invited for the occasion. [83] This is the formal engagement, and those neighbors and friends partaking the food at the table are witnesses to this alliance for both parties. In the future in case of breach of the marriage contract, those at the table may come forth to give their testimony. During the next few days the neighbors rotate to entertain the visitors, who will return to their homes only after this round of receptions is over.

A considerable time is allowed to elapse between engagement and marriage. Before the wedding ceremony the boy's parents select another lucky day to make a formal call upon the girl's family in company with five to eight relatives to deliver cash and other gifts. This is called "sung p'ing-chin" [sending betrothal money] or "tsou k'ê [going as guests]. The cash present varies from $30 or $50 up to $400 or $500, depending upon the financial ability of the boy's family. The dowry of the girl is also proportional to the amount of cash. Other gifts include glutinous rice, (rich families giving as many as [804] one or two piculs [a picul is 100 catties or 133. 3 lbs]), puffed

[83 cont.]

584 rice [candies], cakes, brown sugar, a silver necklace, and one or two fat pigs. The gifts are placed on table scaffoldings, each carried by two men. The presents of rich families can be quite lavish and sometimes amount to as many as a dozen tables. Upon the arrival of the betrothal gifts the bride's family immediately slaughters the pig that has been sent along and prepares a feast to entertain the guests. Before settling down at the table, however, the head of the slaughtered pig and rice and wine must first be offered in sacrifice before the ancestral tablet in the central hall. On the table before the tablet are displayed a sheng of white rice and four bowls of wine while two representatives from each family are invited to sit opposite each other at the table. The head of the groom's family then picks up the cash and the silver necklace both wrapped in a piece of red paper and places them on the rice. Next he burns incense and lights candles to worship the ancestors. After a few minutes the four representatives at the table each pick up a bowl of wine and empties it in one gulp. These then become the witnesses who are required to testify in the event of marital complications or divorce. At that time, if the bride's family considers the cash gift as not large enough to match the dowry, they may ask their representatives to refrain from drinking the wine to indicate dissatisfaction. Thereupon the head of the groom's family immediately makes amends by increasing the cash gift to the amount satisfactory to the bride's family, at which point the representatives from both families would pick up the bowls of wine to drink. After this drinking ceremony the bride's family puts away the cash and the necklace and all return to their tables to continue the feast. Every family in the village sends one representative to the feast, which is by no means sumptuous. [84] Besides large quantities of rice wine there are also quantities of pork. In the meantime the left-over pork, pop corn, and mi-pa [flat rice balls] are distributed among the other families in the village. The following day, as in the case of the engagement, the neighbors in the village begin to entertain the guests by turn. This

[84 cont.]

584 round of festivities lasts about one week, after which the bride's family kills another piglet and gathers together the elders of the village for another feast. This last gay reunion terminates the whole affair. From these customs it may be seen that marriage with the Sui-chia is a big clan affair that not only keeps the families concerned busy but also requires participation by all the kinsfolk in the village. Furthermore, in this custom may be noticed evidences of matriarchy, when the groom's family in presenting the betrothal gifts has to provide one or two extra piglets, puffed rice candies and mi-pa on one or two tables for the maternal uncles of the bride. Otherwise, if the displeasure of these kinsmen is incurred the marriage could be adversely affected.

One or two days after the presentation of gifts, the girl's family must send one pig's leg, a few pieces of black or blue cloth, and cooked glutinous rice for presentation to the boy's family by messengers as a "return gift" in the last act before the wedding.

The wedding day is selected by the groom's family. On
585 that auspicious day a man and a woman are despatched to the bride's family to welcome her to her new home, the man carrying with him a basket, in which are a large piece of cooked pork, glutinous rice and other food. When they arrive at the home of the bride's family the food is offered first before the ancestral tablet in the central hall. At that time the bride stays in her room to put on her best clothes, as well as fineries and silver ornaments, such as bracelets, necklace and earrings. Thus arrayed in her finery she is led out of her chamber by a woman from the groom's family. Passing by the ancestral tablets, she tastes a little of the meat and wine and then departs. Once out of the gate she is not supposed to turn around to look back for fear of bringing bad luck to her old home. Her dowries go along at the same time in the following order: In the first portion are quilts and matresses; in the next portion are leather suitcases, a wardrobe, and the bride's clothes and shoes; last, there are also some ears of grains called "chia-nü ku" [bride's grains]

[84 cont.]
585 to symbolize the power of procreation. [85] Aside from these the dowries include cattle and domestic animals, their number depending upon the financial conditions of the families.

On entering the groom's house the bride receives a bunch of green leaves thrown on her clothes by a male member of the family to indicate the severance of all lingering fancies she may still have for her old home. At the time she enters, the old and young, the male and female members of the groom's family all go into hiding outside the house. Only after the bride has gained possession of her bridal chamber will they emerge to welcome her, but no ceremony is held. The bride stays on 591 as a guest without household responsibilities, and merely waits for an auspicious day to return to her parents' home. The period of her stay at her old home depends upon the length of time she has to wait for the lucky day. On her return journey she is once more arrayed in her wedding finery. Only after going back to her husband the second time will she begin to assume duties as mistress of her new house. After this she may return to her parents again for a short duration each time. Ordinarily after three to five days she has to return to her husband. Among the other Miao tribes the bride after her first return visit, stays on with her parents until the time of her pregnancy, after which she goes back to her husband for a prolonged stay. But the Sui-chia do not have this custom.

5. Religious Beliefs

The objects of worship by the Miao-I are the spirits to 776 whom are attributed all the fortunes and blessings of life, as well as all the disasters that befall human beings. Among the spirits worshiped by the Sui-chia are the Bodhisattva of Mercy [Kuan Yin], the Earth God, the Household God and the Lady Spirit. The Earth God looks after a family, a village or a whole region. The Household God protects the finances, properties, and crops of the family. The Lady Spirit watches over the

[85 cont.]
776 infants, especially their nutrition and safety. In case of bad
crops, a disturbed household, or sicknesses in the family the
spirits are considered to be at work. For this reason people move
very cautiously in their daily activities for fear of offending
the gods.

[86] The spirits are so mysterious that they cannot be
fathomed; their wishes and powers are beyond human com-
791 prehension. They cannot be reached by ordinary mortals,
and for this reason spiritual media are employed in the person
of the "nü-wu" [shaman priestess] and "kuei-shih" [shaman
priest]. The priestess is an agent of the nether world and
the priest that of this world. Illnesses come within the province
of the priest, but disasters have to be handled by the priestess.
Only through these agents can mortals communicate with spirits.
The priestess is also known as "wu-wu" [woman wizard]. The
773 origin of her profession is said to have started from a certain
791 woman who once in early youth was seriously ill. In her coma
she met some young people already deceased, whose spirits
took possession of her body, entreating her: "We are now ghosts
in the nether world; and since it is your destiny to be a bridge
between the "yin" [the nether world] and "yang" [this world],
we are willing to be your followers, and from now on you may
heal sickness, decide issues, divine the future, invoke auspici-
ous omens and avert disasters for the mortals." Having re-
covered from her illness, the woman betrayed signs of derange-
ment and was able to sing the songs of the spirit world. People
soon regarded her as a priestess, and in case of illness and
doubt they would come to her for intercession with the spirits
for cure and enlightenment. If the woman's family refuses to
791 let her become a priestess she would perform magical acts to
coerce its members. Once approved by her family she may
officially perform "kuo-yin" [communicating with the spirits]
for the others, and the signs of derangement would simultane-
ously disappear.

[86 cont.]

There are two ways of "kuo-yin," one ordinary and the other
755 special. The ordinary way does not specify which particular
787 spirit or ghost is to be summoned by the priestess, the choice being left to her discretion. This procedure is mostly applied to the cure of sickness and rarely to the divination of any particular event. The special "kuo-yin" requires a much more
787 elaborate ceremony. The inquirer (the sick person or the family in distress) wishing to get in touch with a particular spirit or ghost must provide a pot of wine, two or three bowls of glutinous rice, a small piece of cooked pork, incense and paper, and a piece of white cloth of about a foot square (in which is wrapped a bowl of white rice) and come with these to the house of the priestess to ask for her help. The priestess would then put a big table in the center hall. On the table stands an open flat bamboo basket, on one side of which is placed a sheng of rice, and on the other the food brought over by the inquirer. This having been done, the priestess settles down at one side of the table facing the gate. She lights the incense sticks and burns some spirit paper. Then she covers her face with a kerchief and inhales the smoke of the burning yellow wax in a bowl. [87] The rising vapor soon makes her unconscious, and shaking her head she begins to sing songs of the nether world. The inquirer listens on. The good or the bad outcome of the event which is the subject of the inquiry is expressed in the tunes and words of the songs.

After singing, the priestess hits the rice in the basket a few times with the package of rice the inquirer has brought over. If the rice in the basket sticks to the center of the cloth, then it is an auspicious sign; but if the rice sticks to the edges of the cloth, it is a bad omen. In case of a bad omen certain spirits must be at work, and in order to avert disaster methods must be devised to offer to the good spirits and to exterminate the evil ones.

After the inquiry the priestess has to return to this world. This is brought about by burning once more a piece of yellow wax in a bowl. When the rising vapor penetrates her nostrils, she awakens suddenly and becomes coherent as before.

[87 cont.]

It is said that the priestess not only can relate present 787 facts but also the past events, both good and bad, that had happened to the inquirer, and in eight or nine cases out of ten she is right. For this reason she is believed and highly regarded. In the worship of any spirit or the extermination of any ghost the priestess alone has her say, the involvement of heavy expenditures being of little concern.

A less important religious activity is the sacrifice to the 782 796 spirits. There are two kinds of sacrifices, periodic and occasional. Sacrifices to the Bodhisattva of Mercy and the Earth God are set respectively on the fifteenth day of the first month and the fourteenth day of the seventh month in the lunar calendar. The sacrifice to the Lady Spirit takes place in the twelfth month on certain tzu (aries) and ch'ou (taurus) days according to the twelve terrestrial branches. The sacrifice to the Household God takes place in the middle of the first month on an auspicious hai (pisces) day when rituals are performed at [777] night. If the hai date in this month is unlucky, then it may be postponed to the second month, or it may take place a month earlier. The rituals at the sacrifices are as follows:

1) For sacrifices to the Bodhisattva of Mercy and the 782 Earth God, a chicken, goose or duck is used together with tea, incense paper, candles, wine, firecrackers, scrolls, red cloth, written pledges, cooked pork and glutinous rice, all of which are carried as offerings to the temple of the god or goddess. After the ceremony they begin to partake of the food in the presence of the spirit. Because the spirit in question [88] guards a family, a village or an area, words on the scrolls are often as follows:

[539] Guarding the luck of the family (or village or area);
Assuring peace in the four seasons.

or

[539] With god's protection in peace I live;
Chicken (or pig or goose) and wine to him I give.

[88 cont.]

782 2) The Lady Spirit protects children in the family, and every household has a set place for her tablet. Every morning and evening a bowl of rice and a bowl of vegetables are placed as offerings before her tablet. In the twelfth month every year, some auspicious tzu and ch'ou days are chosen to make elaborate sacrifices. Previously, dumplings of glutinous rice were wrapped in bamboo leaves and boiled and on the morning of the ritual the table before the Lady Spirit's tablet is washed and cleaned, and on it are placed in a row three or five cups of wine. Away from the table on the ground is a flat bamboo basket, in which is placed a stalk of glutinous rice grains with a woman's blouse and skirt as well as a pair of bracelets and a necklace attached to it. Beside the basket is a bowl of fire, into which is thrown candied rice, which burns in the place of incense, sending curls of smoke upward. This is called "warming the table of the Lady Spirit." In the worship of the Goddess of Mercy and the Household God men and women both take part, but the ritual for the Lady Spirit is performed only by women, children being allowed but men very rarely.

The tablet of the goddess may not be indicated by words. Every year after the sacrificial ceremony a strip of paper a foot long and an inch wide is attached to the end of a bamboo stick and flown on the spirit table along the wall. This strip of paper is preserved permanently and increased every year.

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842 If a woman in a certain family is incapable of bearing children, in addition to observing the fixed rituals every year, she may perform the "nuan chiao" [warming the bridge] ceremony to beg a son by selecting a lucky hai day during the first lunar month. At the ceremony a priestess is asked to "kuo yin" or to communicate with the spirits of the deceased persons. During this performance the priestess generally says: "The officers of the nether world (so the ghosts are addressed) are not reluctant to send along sons to your house but because the road to your house is obstructed by a certain river or ditch (or is too far) where there is no bridge (or stone bench to cross (or to sit on)) they cannot reach you. If your family would build a bridge (or stone bench) over the river or ditch (or on the roadside), your sons and

[88 cont.]

782 842 daughters will come to you one by one." This family, being eager to have children, would obey the spirits' order and select a lucky day to supervise the construction of a bridge and stone benches at a designated place. After the bridge is constructed [89] they would spread straw on the steps in the place of mats and stick bamboo slips along the sides of the bridge, and with the meat and wine they have brought with them they picnic on the bridge with their friends and relatives. The garbage, such as eggshells and the leaf-wrappings of the glutinous rice dumplings, is left beside the bridge to indicate that the spirit of the bridge has accepted the offerings. The straw on the bridge is gathered together and burned beside it, the process being known as "nuan chiao." When the cleaning is done and before the party returns, the host or his immediate family would pick up a few bamboo slips and colored paper on them (blue and red indicating a son and white a daughter) and carry them home. While doing so, they would cry aloud: "Child, come home!" believing that the soul of the expectant child is being borne across the river on the colored paper on the bamboo slips.

(6) Social Customs

431 764 The social etiquette of the Sui-chia is shown principally in funerals and weddings. When a family has a funeral, friends and relatives send gifts. Besides the scrolls of condolence and sacrificial curtains with large characters written on the cloth in Chinese style, the family's intimate friends and relatives may send wine, glutinous rice and live fish. The quality and quantity of the gift depend upon the financial condition of the sender and the degree of his relation with the recipient. If the bereaved party is the family of a married sister, then her brother, besides the gifts mentioned above, has to send one or two piculs of glutinous rice to show his regard for her. Sometimes, the relatives of the bereaved would gather together to make a collective presentation. The quantity of gifts being large, they are presented together on the eve of the funeral procession by all the

[89 cont.]

431 relatives in a solemn setting. When they arrive at the gate, the
764 firecrackers make a resounding din, and the filial son prostrates
himself at the threshold of the house. In the meantime the bereaved family gives a feast to entertain the visitors and distributes funeral scarves, their size depending upon the value of the gifts. After burial the filial son has to slaughter the cattle, horses and pigs which were sent to him as presents, and having made sacrifices to the deceased, has to cut them up in different sizes to be distributed among the gift-givers according to the value of their gifts as an expression of gratitude. This is known as "hsieh ju" [thank-you meat]. If a gift-giver fails to receive a piece of "thank-you meat" or if the size of the meat is not compatible with the gift, he will consider it an affront and demand an explanation. This often [90] causes family complications to such an extent that the parties concerned have to appeal to the village elders for settlement. If the bereaved family is poor and cannot sacrifice horses and cattle to the dead, then generally such gifts are refused so as to avoid giving out the "thank-you meat."

Whenever the bereaved family decides to put up an elaborate
764 mourning and burial ceremony to commemorate the deceased, its intimate friends and relatives have to spend several hundred dollars to make multi-colored mourning banners and
[532] parasols of paper and bamboo as well as effigies of fish, shrimp, turtles, crabs, dragons, phoenixes, the eight fairies, the twenty-four filial persons, horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs, etc. All the friends and relatives would be invited to carry the effigies and gather in groups to march to the place of mourning. En route they would blow trumpets and horns, beat cymbals and drums, and set off firecrackers to make it a festive occasion.

With the Chinese, to attend a funeral is to extend condolence to the bereaved family, and all relatives, regardless of sex, should participate in the ceremony. Sometimes a funeral provides an opportunity for the family's female relatives to get together. With the Sui-chia, women generally do not participate unless it is the funeral of a near relative or a member of the woman's own family. To reach the place of mourning the

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764 women participating go separately instead of going in groups like the men. The bereaved family sets aside an area for the singing of funeral songs, and asks one man and one woman to render solos in dialogues, recounting the life and extolling the virtues of the deceased. The women mourners all gather around the singing area to listen. The affair lasts for a day and night and becomes a social function for people to visit with each other.

431 585 In regard to the wedding ceremony, men's gifts are principally money in envelopes, ranging from 10 to 20 cents to $4 or $5. Recently they also began to present scrolls of calligraphy, but these are limited to rich and literate people. Women's presents are limited to jewelry such as necklaces and bracelets for the bride. The period of presentation starts with the wedding day, after which gifts are received as they come; the whole event lasts from four to five months. The receipt of wedding presents is limited to the groom's family, while the bride's family never receives any gifts, nor has the obligation to entertain friends and relatives. After the wedding women guests may each bring back a "return package," consisting of cooked rice, meat and tz'u-pa [glutinous rice balls] for distribution [91] among members of her family. Male guests receive no such courtesy.

431 574 Besides weddings and funerals, friends and relatives may exchange presents on New Year festivals or other happy occasions. Ordinarily when friends and relatives visit a family, the host, no matter whether he is rich or poor, must serve wine and food, if he did not the guests would view it as a sign of contempt. Intimate friends and relatives making the first call are not treated with goose or duck for fear that there might be quarrels between them later to hurt each other's feelings, as the beaks of the goose and duck are flat and large and therefore portend querulousness. If a chicken is used it must be cooked whole
[787] to see if the two eyes are completely closed. If one or two eyes are half open, then it is an evil portent.

533 [535] Daily recreations include dancing, singing and music. Dancing and singing takes place mostly during the funeral and mourning period. Aside from this the custom of singing is observed often

[91 cont.]

533 at women's dinner parties. At the engagement and wedding receptions, attended by many female relatives and friends, if the guests fail to drink, the host at the table sings songs to urge them to do so. The words of the songs vary according to the status of the singers. Usually the host sings songs expressing modesty or self-humiliation, while on the other hand, the guests sing songs extolling the virtues and the prosperity of the host, as well as making comments on the hospitable reception given them. The other guests sing for both sides.

836 Although social intercourse between young men and women
among the Sui-chia is closely watched by the father and elder
brother, unconventional meetings still cannot be helped. Ordinarily, at normal social functions two persons who find themselves
compatible and in love may then and there ask someone to be
their go-between. After being formally introduced the man
buys some silk or satin material to present to the girl as a
souvenir. After this they become lovers. The two then appoint
a day to "play in the mountains," generally in the woods at
night. When the time and place are decided, the man may go
alone or with friends to the appointed place to wait, whistling
and making signals. When midnight comes and her family is
asleep the girl goes stealthily to her assignation. After meeting
the two go farther away from the village to exchange confidences
and to sing to each other. Early next morning they separate and
go back to their respective homes. After this they dutifully keep
their appointments. After a few more times as their sentiments
for each other increase they would go secretly to another village
[92] to reside in a family for a few days, killing chickens, ducks
and piglets to enjoy themselves. But as family restrictions are
very strict, they still dare not marry even though they are deeply
684 in love. If unfortunately their affair is known to the families,
especially the girl's family, she would be terribly beaten because
free-love is considered a disgrace to the ancestors. (The boy
comes out with only a mild reprimand from his family.) If after
repeated warning the girl does not reform, she could be expelled
from the family. If she is a married woman or already engaged,

S [92 cont.]

684 then the life of the lover will be threatened when the affair comes to the knowledge of her husband or fiancé. If both lovers are killed, society takes no notice of the case; but if only one party is killed, the other could still prosecute the matter.

S 562 574 There are other restrictions between men and women. If male guests arrive, only the host of the family sits at the table, and the mistress takes no part in the reception. Likewise, if female guests arrive, the hostess will act her part but the master of the house will ignore the visit, at most exchanging a few polite remarks. Male and female guests are rarely seen sharing the same table. On the other hand, when men and women are found wining and singing together the women would be considered as crazy and shameless, and public opinion would be to their detriment.

From this it may be seen that the relationship between men and women among the Sui-chia, although not reaching the extent of "not handing things to each other" is subject to the closest scrutiny from all sides.

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[113] The Story of the Miao Ancestors

Wu Che-lin

1. Introduction

M 174 563 There are many different Miao-I tribes in Kweichow, but in the opinion of modern anthropologists they fall into three large groups. According to their geographical distribution those in the east are mostly the Miao, those in the south and the southwest are mostly the Chung-chia, and those in the northwest along the Wei-ning area are mostly the Lolo. The Miao probably came from Hunan. (Originally they were distributed in Central

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174 China, and later due to pressure from the Chinese they migrated
563 to the south.) The Chung-chia probably came from Yunnan and Kwangsi and together with the Siamese [Thai] belong to the Pai-Shan linguistic group. The Lolo came from the borders of Szechwan and Yunnan, and their language is of the same branch as that of the Burmese. To confirm or to disprove this
121 theory we have to be guided by two criteria in our study: first, the criterion of physical anthropology, and second, the criterion of cultural anthropology. Within the confines of physical anthropology, besides the measurement of head and nose indices and cheek-bone protrusion, the study of blood types has become a reliable standard of racial classification in modern anthropology. Within the confines of cultural anthropology the comparison of languages is an important method of study, while a comparative study of customs, folklore and myths is also exceedingly valuable.

The comparative study of myths and folklore is highly regarded by American anthropologists because the similarities in these tales can establish evidences of kinship and mutual influences between various ethnic groups. This method of study is generally known as the historical method of anthropology. It is not concerned with the historical value of mythology for the group, nor with its effect upon the tribal people, nor with its literary value. This [114] method is concerned only with an objective comparison of all the stories to determine the particular group to which the tribes belong and the route of their migration.

Mythology and folklore represent the background of a certain period and reflect the degree of civilization of a tribal group at the time the myths originated. Franz Boas, the leading anthropologist today, has collected over a hundred mythological tales among the Tsimshian Indians and the following is his conclusion:

> "It is obvious that in the tales of a people those incidents of the everyday life that are of importance to them will appear either incidentally or as the basis of a plot. Most of the references to the mode of life of the people will be an accurate reflection of their

[114 cont.]

121 habits. The development of the plot of the story, furthermore, will, on the whole, exhibit clearly what is considered right and what wrong. .... Material of this kind does not represent a systematic description of the ethnology of the people, but it has the merit of bringing out those points which are of interest to the people themselves. They present in a way an autobiography of the tribe." (1)

[1. Franz Boas, Tsimshian Mythology, Thirty-first Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1909-1910 (Washington, D.C., 1916), p. 393.]

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As to the origin of man, stories vary according to different racial groups. Among these, however, there are points of similarity such as the story of the flood, the rescue of a small number of people favored by the spirits and ghosts, marriages between brothers and sisters, and so on. There are many such stories among the Miao in Kweichow, and in several respects their central theme is rather analogous to that of similar tales among other racial groups elsewhere in the world. The following is an account of some mythological tales among the Hua Miao and the Hê Miao for the reference of ethnologists.

2. The Folklore of the Hua Miao

539 [115] One day two brothers finished ploughing a field. The next morning they found, to their surprise, that their previous day's work was undone by some people for the field was levelled down as if it had never been ploughed. In their distress and uncertainty they had to plough the field all over again. But the second morning they found that the field was once more levelled. This was repeated four times and they were greatly

[115 cont.]

539 astonished. At last they decided to plough once more, but they concealed themselves that night by the side of the field and kept a secret watch. When midnight came they found an old woman descending from the sky with a wooden plank. She first removed the earth lumps and then with the wooden plank levelled the earth. The elder brother immediately informed the younger one of his wish to kill the old woman, but the younger brother did not consent as he felt she was entitled to a hearing before any action was taken. In the course of cross-examination it was discovered from the old woman that their effort would be futile for soon they would be visited by a flood. She instructed the elder brother that when the flood came he should hide himself in an iron drum, and she also told the younger brother to chop down a tree trunk and to make a hollow inside in the shape of a drum so that he could hide himself there in the event of a flood. Afterwards the flood did come, and the elder brother inside the iron drum was drowned shortly, but the younger brother, who had asked his younger sister to hide with him in the drum-like tree trunk survived the disaster together. The flood, however, was furious and rose as high as the horizons so that the tree trunk was tossed about by the waves, floating here and there. One day it was seen by a fairy who was greatly astonished. This fairy thought that he himself had twelve horns on his head, but the tree trunk had even many more (all the little branches on the trunk were regarded by the fairy as horns), and fearing that the multi-horned monster would do him harm, he ordered the dragon eels, lizards and tadpoles to dig holes in the earth. The holes conducted the water underground and in twenty days the flood completely subsided. The tree trunk floated down with the retreating flood, but unfortunately it landed on a high precipitous cliff and was unable to touch the ground. Soon a mother eagle came to nest on the tree trunk and laid two eggs, which produced two young eagles. Taking advantage of their presence, the brother made plans for escape. He pulled out a lot of his hair and made it into a thread, which he tied on the feathers of the young eagles to prevent them from

[115 cont.]

539 flying. After a considerable time the mother eagle, seeing that her children could not fly, began to get worried [116] and consulted a fairy. The latter asked the eagle to seek the help of the tree trunk, but in recompense the tree trunk had to be lowered to the ground. Thereupon the eagle begged of the tree trunk, and of course the brother inside the trunk could easily grant the request, and he made the disposition of the trunk a condition. When this was agreed upon, he released the wings of the little eagles by removing the hair thread. The little eagles were free to fly out and at the same time the mother eagle removed the trunk to the ground. When the brother and sister stepped out on the level ground, they raised their eyes and found no kinsmen anywhere. There was no fire to keep warm, or rice to satisfy their hunger. Suddenly the brother saw a red robin resting hard by. He picked up a piece of scrap iron and threw it over. The missile missed the bird but hit a rock, scattering sparks all around. Thus they learned the method of making fire. They gathered a heap of dried straw and lit it to keep warm.

There being no other human beings in the world, the brother begged his sister to marry him. The latter refused, whereupon the brother proposed that they both should go up the mountain and from its top each toss a piece of round, smooth millstone down the valley, and if the two stones should roll together they should get married. Thus they undertook the test, and the two stones actually rolled together, but the sister was still unwilling and proposed a second test. The sister took a needle and the brother a piece of thread, both of which were to be thrown into the valley, and if the thread should pierce through the needle hole then the sister would be willing to be married. The result being that the needle was threaded, they became husband and wife. Afterwards they had a son, but it was a monster without arms and legs. They went to consult a fairy, who told them to cut up the monster into a hundred pieces and to scatter them everywhere. The next morning all these pieces of flesh became men and women. They adopted as their names the objects they hit upon, such as Shui (water), Mu (wood) and

[116 cont.]

Shih (stone), and from these came the beginning of the hundred names.

Among the Ta Hua Miao [Big Flowery Miao] in Wei-ning there is a somewhat similar kind of myth about the origin of man. According to this story, the day after the recession of the flood two persons, who were brother and sister, went out to examine the situation. They saw a piece of rotton wood in a distant forest. Picking it up, the brother hit it and unexpectedly it yielded fire. The smoke curled skyward and was [117] seen by the God of Thunder, who dispatched a messenger to inquire who was responsible for the fire. The brother and sister told their story. When the messenger went back to make his report, the Thunder God said: "Mankind has already been exterminated, but that these two are not dead must be the will of Heaven." So he ordered them to be married. The brother was reluctant because he felt that marriage between kinsmen was against the law of human relationships, but the Thunder God asked them to consult the Lord of Felicity, who decided that marriage should take place. The brother and sister also went through the same tests of tossing millstones and threading the needle as in the previous story. Among the Ta Hua Miao there is a song of the flood, which may be translated as follows:

The Song of the Flood

In the beginning of things - how exuberant
In an era, peaceful and distant,
Heaven and earth knew no strife
And carefree and abundant was life.
Things were created when cosmos dawned,
Together with a man and his mate.
To them two sons and a girl were born,
The eldest named Yü Huang.
[118]
Chih Lai was the second son,
And a daughter named Yi Ming.

[118 cont.]

Spirits and men had love and peace,
Sharing the sun, which gave life to all.
So said the first man and his wife
To Yü Huang and Chih Lai:
"You two must go to the field,
To till the land with diligence."
And so the two sons went afield,
And soon the waste land was made to yield.
But in the dead of night
The Lord of Felicity sent along
A messenger named Hsien Ming
With a written order and a spirit wand
To Yü Huang and Chih Lai, announcing
"The end of the world in a flood.
[119]
"So why should your toil be continued?"
But Yü Huang and Chih Lai heeded not,
And field work still the two pursued -
The words of God were soon forgot.
The Lord of Felicity waxed furious,
And dispatched Hsien Ming once again
With magic wand on mission curious
At night as the moon began to wane.
The field was hardened as if unploughed,
And weeds and rushes grew lush.
At night the brothers quietly waited
At yonder fields the prowler to catch.
They found Hsien Ming, the messenger.
"Let's condemn the man to death," said Yü Huang.
[120]
"No, let us ask him why," was Chih Lai's reply.
And Hsien Ming, nodding, said: "Aye, aye,
"When thirteen strikes, the cycle ends,
The darkened sky will be overcast,
In angry waves the flood descends
To wipe away the earth at last."
But Yü Huang and Chih Lai gave no credence,

[120 cont.]

As day followed night, and night followed day
In uninterrupted sequence, and time it was
For the thirteen hour here to stay.
And lo! soon came the raging flood
To bear out the words of the Lord of Felicity.
Yü Huang, who had a heart cruel and wicked,
Was given an iron boat by the god.
To Chih Lai with a merciful heart
[121]
The Lord gave a pinewood boat:
The iron boat sank with the load,
But the pine boat was found afloat.
Chih Lai and his sister were the only survivors;
Even birds and beasts were all drowned,
Except some white eggs in the pine boat,
Which in the armpit they hatched.
In the boat were hatched out some little chicks.
There was no life on the boundless sea:
No fowls or dogs, birds or beasts.
All sounds were hushed except the voice
Of Chih Lai and Yi Ming talking to each other,
And the chicks making a slight noise,
For in the world all life had perished.
So Chih Lai had no other way but to ask
[122]
Hsien Ming, Messenger of the Lord of Felicity:
"Now that mankind is destroyed,
Except the two of us, brother and sister,
What shall we do to live?"
"As mankind has been wiped out from the world,
So you too, brother and sister, should unite
In wedlock, to be the progenitors of mankind."
"But how can there be marriage between us brother
and sister?
The words of the Lord of Felicity we dare not follow."
"If hesitant you still are,
Why not divine your Destiny by rolling down

[122 cont.]

539 Two halves of a millstone from east and west of the river?"
And, so brother and sister hurried back
To the boat and there rolled down the bank the millstone.
And who would imagine that the two halves were united
[123]
Not only once but as many as four times!
Then brother and sister no longer hesitated,
But husband and wife they became.
Looking back at the shore, Chih Lai saw
A pheasant stand there on yonder rock,
And picking up a piece of iron, he aimed at it.
Who would imagine that the iron hit the rock
And there from the crevice sparks came forth.
The sparks burnt the grass on the rock
As flames and smoke curled up to the skies.
Now brother and sister had fire to cook their food.
All on earth was once again in a peaceful mood,
And the universe returned to its primeval calm and ease.
The myriad things thrived; men and spirits lived in peace.
The flood was gone and the world in harmony.
Brother and sister loved each other tenderly;
From their wedlock sons and daughters sprang.
The eldest son was Chao Yung,
The second son Chao Yang;
And the third son Chao Yao.
For myriads of generations the people in the world
Were their descendants all.

[114] (This song was translated [into Chinese] by Mr. Yang Han-hsien and published in Kweichow jih-pao [Kweichow Times], "The Social Studies Supplement," No. 9, edited by the Social Science Research Institute of the Ta-hsia University.)

[123 cont.]

3. The Folklore of the Hê Miao at Pa-chai

It was said that at the very beginning there were nine eggs in a certain mountain cave. (It was not known whence the eggs came.) After having been hatched by "Mother Sun," eight sons were born, the eldest was Thunder, the other seven being Dragon, Snake, Tiger, Nine-headed Monster, Python, Wolf and Monkey. The last one who came out said that the ninth refused to follow him. The mother thought it was a spoiled egg and she was about to crush it when she heard a voice inside saying: "Mother, do not crush me. I am coming out in three days. My name is Lao Yen. When I come out I should be the eldest brother." The mother complied and hugged the egg for three more days when at last a boy was born. This son was the cleverest of all and immediately was able to talk. It was said that he was closely related to mankind.

[125] After the birth of the ninth son there was no harmony among the brothers. Lao Yen, who acted most strangely, always made fun of his brothers. The mother had already decided to send the eldest son Thunder to heaven to administer the skies. The youngest son, Lao Yen, was displeased and at the same time harbored evil intentions to harm the other seven brothers. One day he invited them to an outing on the mountain, but had previously laid down a plan to trap them. When all the others had climbed up the mountain he set fire to the foot of the mountain on all sides. But the brothers discovered the plot in time and fled home. When the mother knew that the youngest son was full of intrigues, she summoned all the eight brothers together and said to them: "Since you are close together like the four limbs, you should not plot against each other. Lao Yen is the youngest, but also the cleverest. So all the affairs on earth should be administered by him, and the rest of you should obey him. ...." Thus Lao Yen, being commissioned by the mother, began to administer all earthly affairs, but he was by nature lazy and did not attend to agriculture. When

[125 cont.]

539 Thunder looked down from heaven he saw the land was overgrown with weeds, and he reprimanded Lao Yen, saying: "Being head of the earth, why don't you begin cultivation?" Lao Yen replied: "I have no cow." Thereupon Thunder sent down a cow. Lao Yen slaughtered the cow and ate it. He stuck the tail outside a stone cave. When Thunder came down to earth to investigate, he found the field still barren. Furious, Thunder asked: "Where is the cow?" Lao Yen had evil intentions to harm Thunder and a thought suddenly flashed across his mind.

He said to Thunder: "The cow has been locked up in the cave. I go inside to push and you stay outside to pull the tail. What do you say?"

Thunder did not doubt his intention. Actually Lao Yen also tugged at the tail from inside the cave, and when he saw Thunder was pulling with all his might, he let go of the tail and Thunder went rolling down the hill. Lao Yen thought he had killed his brother, but actually Thunder hit a pile of straw and was unhurt. When Thunder went back to heaven he planned for vengeance. Later Lao Yen also knew that Thunder was still at large and became more cautious, but he still made evil plans.

One day Thunder arrived, gathering storm and rain, and flung an axe in the direction of Lao Yen. It missed its target, but in the movement Thunder lost his equilibrium and fell down to earth and was caught by Lao Yen, who put the captive in an iron cage. Lao Yen planned to select a lucky day to kill Thunder. Each time Lao Yen left the house he took care to warn the neighbors not to give water to Thunder, because with water [126] Thunder would become mighty again. One day after Lao Yen had left, a neighbor's two children (brother and sister) came around the house. Thunder begged them to give him some water. The two, fearing Lao Yen, did not dare to accede to the request, but were finally persuaded by Thunder to bring over some water.

With water in his possession Thunder said to the children: "Lao Yen is a wicked person. I want to drown him in a big flood. You two go quickly to plant some gourds, which will soon flower and bear fruit. Be sure to choose the biggest and

[126 cont.]

the most solid one and dig out the seeds. When flood comes you can sit in the gourd to save your lives."

After so saying, Thunder jumped out of the iron cage and went away. The brother and sister did what they were told. Shortly, the flood actually came, drowning everything on earth, except the brother and sister who were saved in the gourd. Afterwards the two married, producing offspring who are the people of the world today.

4. The Folklore of the Short-skirt Hê Miao

Among the Short-skirt Hê Miao at Lu-shan, Ma-chiang, Tan-chiang and Pa-chai there is also a story of the flood and the marriage between brother and sister. In some respects, its content is rather different from that of the previous story. According to their folklore when heaven and earth were first created there were a couple, the man named Kao-chia-liang (Miao pronunciation) and the woman, Hu-chia-hsiu. They had a son and a daughter, the son named Pan-yang and the daughter, Ch'ê-yang. When Ch'ê-yang grew up she became a beautiful woman, whom Kao-chia-liang secretly married. When Hu-chia-hsiu knew of the affair she gave her husband no peace all day long, with the result that they divided the property and the woman drove her husband away from home. Three years elapsed, but Hu-chia-hsiu could not live like a widow and went away in search of Kao-chia-liang. At this time Hu-chia-hsiu became pregnant and laid by the roadside twelve stone eggs, eleven of which broke open on touching the ground. Each broken egg produced [127] a male adult. But the last stone egg did not break on touching the ground, and instead a human voice inside said that after three days he was to come out to join the rest. Three days later an adult male actually emerged. The twelve persons called each other brothers, but the youngest was the cleverest of all and envied by the rest. To acquire the property

[127 cont.]

539 of the parents they were engaged in constant fights. One day the twelve brothers drank together, but the youngest brother filled his gourd with cold water and poured real wine into his brothers' cups. When they were drunk and fast asleep, he lit a pile of straw and pushed his brothers into the fire to be burned alive. After death one brother became Thunder and ascended into the sky; one became a dragon and descended into the water; one became a snake and crept into a hole; one became a tiger and hid himself deep in the woods; one became a weasel and climbed up a hill; the other six all became animals and went away in search of food. When Thunder reached heaven he thought of revenge by sending down a disastrous flood to drown his wicked brother. But the youngest brother managed to reach heaven in time and did not return to earth until after the flood had subsided. One day he met a beautiful young woman, who was his younger sister born afterwards by his mother. They married each other and soon gave birth to an eyeless and noseless monster shaped like a melon. They killed the monster, cut it into twelve pieces and abandoned them on the ground. Unexpectedly each piece of flesh became the ancestor of a Miao tribe, and the last piece was the forefather of the Short-skirt Hê Miao today.

5. Conclusion

773
171 The myths regarding the origin of man are generally alike in substance among the Hê Miao at Pa-chai, the Hua Miao and the Short-skirt Hê Miao. [128] A few points worthy of note are: first, the stories are not related to man's first ancestors after the creation, but to the resuscitation of mankind after the flood. They are not the stories of Adam and Eve but those of Noah. The story of the flood is found in the myths of all these primitive peoples. The Miao are supposed to have originally migrated from Hunan and Kiangsi, and the flood referred to in their myths was probably the legendary flood during the time

[128 cont.]

171 of the great Yü [who finally quelled the flood and was made an
773 emperor]. Although their ancestors might not have lived in the flood devastated valleys, at least through contacts with the Chinese or from Chinese legends they might have gotten the stories. These referred to the use of iron knives, iron pieces, needles, and other metals. So if iron was only first used during the Ch'un Ch'iu period [spring and autumn, an historical period from 722 to 484 B.C.], this body of folklore must have originated after that period. In all these stories the surviving brother and sister eventually got married.* Anthropologists have informed us that marriage between brother and sister was early tabooed among all ethnic groups, and that violations were considered serious perversions of nature and human relationship. Among the royal families in ancient Egypt, Peru, Japan and India such marriages were permitted at first to preserve the purity of the royal blood, but soon this custom was abolished. The incestuous marriages in the Miao myths have shown that the sisters were the unwilling parties, who yielded only after much persuasion and reluctance. It is apparent that at the time these mythological tales became current, unions between brothers and sisters were no longer in vogue or already under ban. Otherwise, there is no reason why these marriages should be consummated only after the fulfillment of some impossible conditions. According to eugenic reports marriages within the family are detrimental to the offspring. The children born of a marriage between brother and sister may have the beautiful looks of Cleopatra of ancient Egypt, but statistically considered they are in the majority weak of mind and body. In the mythologies of the Hê Miao and Hua Miao, the children of such marriages were all crippled monsters. Among the Ya-ch'üeh Miao there is a similar story, in which the offspring was not only without four limbs but also dumb. This genetical fact had already been noticed by these primitive peoples. We do not know whether there was ever a custom among the Chinese of marriage between brother and sister, but in any case at the Ch'un Ch'iu period incestuous marriage [129] was banned because of its "non-productivity" and "disease-giving

[129 cont.]

171 773 nature." The reform in the Miao marriage system probably did not antedate the reform in the Chinese marriage system. This also attests to the fact that their mythologies were shaped after the Ch'un Ch'iu period, or at least that they underwent many changes later.

174 From these myths we can gather some material regarding the origin of fire. We know that fire used by the primitive people originated from natural sources, such as forest fires resulting from lightning, fire from volcanoes, and other causes such as spontaneous combustion of withered leaves. This kind of natural fire was preserved and used by man. Later, man learned how to obtain fire through artificial means and the use of fire became more extensive. There were two methods of obtaining fire, one by striking an object and the other through friction. Which of these methods came first is a question not yet satisfactorily solved. American anthropologists ha[illegible] abundant material from the American Indians to show that the [illegible]thod of friction preceded the method of striking. 174 372 According to the mythology of the Hua Miao, fire was obtained by hitting a piece of iron against a rock, which is clearly the method of striking. Of course it does not have to depend upon a piece of metal. In fact the [illegible]king of fire through artificial means long antedated the iron age. Flints hitting each other could always yield sparks of fire, and the story of the metal piece was evidently introduced later by the Miao. In any case they provide an evidence that with the Miao striking preceded friction in making fire. At the same time it illustrates that the development of fire varied with localities, and did not necessarily follow a definite procedure as held by the classical school. This is a point in anthropology worthy of our attention.

114 (This article was first published in the "She-hui hsün-k'an" [Social Studies, a publication appearing every ten days], Nos. 4-5, of the Kwei-yang Ke-ming Jih-pao [Kwei-yang Revolutionary Times], May 19, 1938, and has been slightly revised in its present form.)

The Ancestral Myth of the Sheng Miao

Ch'en Kuo-chün

1. Who are the Sheng Miao?

101 The Sheng (wild) Miao and the Shu (assimilated) Miao are 184 two antithetical terms, with which the early scholars distinguished the various Miao tribes. These two names are self-explanatory. The Sheng Miao are those Miao who live in the wild and distant mountains without any intercourse with the Chinese. Their nature is wild and cannot be disciplined; their foods are hard and uncooked. The Shu Miao, on the other hand, reside in the [177] nearby mountains, where they learn to speak the Chinese language and trade with the Chinese. They plant and cultivate the land in almost the same way as the Chinese. Originally, before the Miao were civilized they were all vaguely called the Sheng Miao. But after the lapse of a great deal of time, the Chinese population in the Miao areas increased and their relations with the Miao became closer so that a part of the Miao who were assimilated by the Chinese became known as the Shu Miao. The other part of the Miao who were backward and unassimilated continued to be called Sheng Miao. The "Man-chuan" [Record of the Savages] in the *Kweichow T'ung-chih* [Kweichow Gazetteer] says: "Those Miao who have *t'u-ssu* [headmen] are the Shu Miao, and those without them are the Sheng Miao." This division is based upon the fact whether they are ruled by native chieftains or not. Again, according to Hu Ting's "Miao-Man pu-lo k'ao" [Studies in the Miao and Man Tribes] in *Li-p'ing-fu chih* [Gazetteer of Li-p'ing Prefecture]: "As to the Miao .... those who live near the *fu* [prefecture] and *hsien* [county] areas are the Shu Miao; they pay taxes and contribute labor more or less like the Chinese. Those not living in these places are the Sheng Miao, who however greatly outnumber the Shu Miao." Later, as the Miao society progressed, the 101 Shu Miao gradually outnumbered the Sheng Miao, who were confined to certain remote areas. Regarding the various Miao

[130 cont.] Regarding the various Miao

101 and Man tribes, the Ch'ien-shu [History of Kweichow] has this to 131 say: "Who are the Sheng Miao? The Ku-lin at Ting-fan, the Ch'iu-ku at Hsing-lung, Ch'ing-p'ing and P'ien-ch'iao, the Tzu-chiang at Tu-yün, the Ch'iu-hsing and Ch'iu-ming at T'ien-pa, the Hê Miao at Cheng-yüan, the Hung Miao at T'ung-jen, the Yang-tung and the Lu-han at Li-p'ing are all Miao." As the nature of these Miao people was ferocious, the Manchu government was very much [131] worried and put them all in the same category as the Sheng Miao. Today, the original settlements of the Sheng Miao cannot be traced with certainty even after extensive investigations in the Miao area by the writer of this article. The Miao in the above stated areas have all been assimilated and are no longer called Sheng Miao. Actually, there is only one remnant Sheng Miao group left. When the writer went to Hsia-chiang hsien in the southeastern corner of Kweichow, he discovered a group of genuine Sheng Miao. The ch'ien-nan [113] chih-fang chi-lüeh [An Official Report on South Kweichow] compiled by Lo Jao-tien, Provincial Treasurer of Kweichow during the Ch'ing Dynasty, has the following to say regarding the Sheng Miao in the Hsia-chiang area.

"At Hsia-chiang there is a group of Sheng Miao, generally considered good-natured, weak and easily cheated, who are always taken advantage of by the Hung Miao at Ch'u-nan and Yung-feng. The Sheng Miao cultivate the highlands, and are more ignorant and primitive than those at T'ai-kung and Ch'ing-chiang. When they sell their fields they use carved wood [as a sort of contract].

The name Sheng Miao, of course, is given by the Chinese, but without their sensibility being hurt they call themselves "ta-meng-niu," the Miao word for "Sheng Miao." The name, however, conveys more or less an idea of contempt. Sometimes they also call themselves "ta-meng-feng-pai," meaning the "High-slope Miao." This indicates their residence on the high ground. According to the writer's findings, Kao-p'o Miao [High-slope Miao] is another name of the Hê Miao. The Sheng Miao at

131 [131 cont.]
101 Hsia-chiang are also known as Kao-p'o Miao. There are quite a
[184] few differences in language, costumes and customs between them,
but in racial affinity they are the same as the Hê Miao. The
area distribution of the Hê Miao in Kweichow is rather extensive,
and the hsien districts in the southeastern part of the province
all have traces of the Hê Miao. Under the general name of
Hê Miao, there are a number of sub-divisions, which, according
to the writer's findings, include the Chang-ch'ün Miao, the
Tuan-ch'ün Miao, the Hua-i Miao, the Kao-p'o Miao, the Hê-i
Miao, the Lao-hê Miao, the Pa-chai Miao, the Shan Miao and
the Sheng Miao. The Sheng Miao at Hsia-chiang are the most
backward and primitive among the Hê Miao.

Hsia-chiang is the farthest hsien district in Kweichow on
131 the border of Kwangsi province. The hsien recently has been
133 divided into three administrative areas, the third area being
the concentration point of the Sheng Miao. [132] It is surrounded
by a river of one hundred li, forming a natural barrier with the
other areas. This river is called by the Sheng Miao "wu-niu,"
meaning a river belonging to the Sheng Miao. As the Sheng
Miao within the third area never mix with the other groups and
have always been an independent community, so the Chinese
call the third district the Sheng Miao area. It consists of a long
and broad strip of territory in the western half of Hsia-chiang,
surrounded by high mountain cliffs and huge bamboo groves,
forming a continuous and impassable barrier with only two entrances at Tsai-pien and Tung-lang, both narrow paths like
sheep intestines. The backwardness of their civilization is due
to such geographical isolation and their living conditions cannot
be other than primitive.

The area of the Sheng Miao, according to their exaggerated
account, extends to 9,000 li, but actually the area is about 200
[sq.] li in length and width. It is a mountainous area, the highest peak at Teng-k'ung-ming-t'ang being 2,000 meters, and the
total population about 10,000. The writer has visited altogether
361 101 Sheng Miao villages of all sizes, the largest being Chia-lu,
Chia-mien, Chia-ya, Chia-lung, Chia-wêng, Cheng-yu, Tang-wêng and Chüeh-ts'ai-p'ing, with about 100 families in each.

[132 cont.]
443 Even today they do not have a single market fair within the area
and this shows how circumscribed is the sphere of their economic
activity. Their only means of livelihood is agriculture. Almost
243 all the fields are terraced according to natural topography, rising
from the bottom of the slope to the top in several hundred layers.
The shape of the field is long and narrow, producing rice,
wheat, corn and barley. These terraced fields are not fertile
[242] and the Sheng Miao do not know how to apply fertilizer. Further-
[132] more, the temperature in the whole area is very low, and a
plentiful harvest is not possible. The proverb says that "when
the soil is barren, the people must be poor." Although the
511 Sheng Miao toil all year round in the hard struggle for survival,
they can only eke out a bare existence. Being in direct contact
with them, the writer could watch at close quarters their ex-
tremely miserable conditions, which are pitiable indeed. Be-
cause of their ignorance they do not know how to save or to
improve the method of production. In case of famine they can-
not escape starvation, [133] which is the most important reason
for the decrease in their population.

1 In our study of the Miao culture we find it varies with dif-
105 ferent ethnic units and localities, each having its peculiar traits.
The distinguishing features of the Sheng Miao, who differ a great
deal from the other tribes, are as follows:

1. Ignorant and straightforward, they are easily duped. They are ready to proclaim themselves "kings" and to create disturbances.

2. The men are black in complexion, red-eyed, dishevelled, and tall and big in stature.

3. Up to this day not a single one of them can talk fluent Chinese.

4. There are peculiar styles of costumes for men and women.

5. Their staple food is glutinous rice, supplemented by raw meat, raw blood, bees, locusts, centipedes, earthworms, tree worms, sand worms, water worms, mountain rats and lizards.

6. The women are fond of smoking leaf tobacco.

[133 cont.]

105 7. In marriage cattle are used as betrothal gifts. Men may have two or three wives.

8. According to their customs marriage between cousins is a matter of course.

9. Their men and women are used to premarital affairs.

10. When a woman dies after marriage her parents are entitled to "bone money" from her husband.

11. The aged are weary of life and willing to be buried alive. This is in line with the ancient story of taking one's life on completing the cycle of sixty years.

[134]

12. They still have a "black-ear" slave system.

13. Every village has a village head, and in case of urgent events announcements are made by sending out wooden tablets.

14. Huan-ku-chang [lit., to settle an old account] is an important festival occasion, celebrated with beef or pork.

15. There is current a story of "the changed woman."

2. Three Versions of Their Ancestral Myth

121/773 What was the origin of the ancestors of man? Every ethnic group has its own hereditary myth, which in modern mythology is known as the ancestral myth. The ancestral myth of whatever group is always an account of inconceivable miraculous events, from which, however, we can have a glimpse into the infantile psychology and the living condition of the primitive people as well as their conceptions of the universe, creation, and ancestors. Therefore, when an ethnologist is lucky enough to acquire the ancestral myth of an ethnic group he has a very valuable material in his possession. W[illegible]
773 the present writer went to the Sheng Miao area at Hsia-chian[illegible] to make a systematic investigation he gathered a great deal of material worthy of study especially the original regarding their ancestors. The Sheng Miao are the most primitive among

[134 cont.]
773 the Miao, and this mythology is therefore the oldest and the most important.

As far as the present writer is aware, the ancestral myths of the different Miao tribes vary slightly, but that of the Sheng Miao is especially interesting. Disregarding the irrationality of these strange events, we have to recognize the fact that with the simple, ignorant people mythology is their living history. This kind of myth came from an unknown period in ancient times, that is, the mythical period. If we ask the Sheng Miao about their myth, they would say that they "do not understand" or that "it was handed down from generation to generation by their ancestors since the remotest times." They have long since forgotten [135] its origin. Some of the Sheng Miao are specially
773 entrusted with the duty of preserving and passing on such tales,
888 and they are generally well-known leaders or aged people with good memories. Young men and women know a little about these stories, but cannot tell them entirely. These mythical tales are not told for recreation, as ordinary stories and as a rule they are not commonly heard. We know that with the primitive people experience is very important. The young people usually listen to the words and warnings of the aged, who become automatically their guardians and leaders. With the Sheng Miao it is the same. The old people are the custodians of all their knowledge and wisdom. The fact that they can recount their ancestral myths entitles them to special respect. The telling of myths is a special occasion, from which outsiders are not often excluded. If we compel them to tell the stories, they would find excuses or else would not do a thorough job for fear that they may be ridiculed.

In every Sheng Miao village there is a set of rules and
627 regulations which are voluntarily observed. In case of violation
773 the offense is quickly adjudged by the public and an elder is invited to execute the punishment. Before it is carried out, however, he would tell the accused in a solemn manner the myths of their ancestors. Also in the case of a serious dispute the elder would summon both parties together, and first tell them the story of their ancestors before settling the dispute.

[135 cont.]

627 773 After a decision is rendered in this fashion both parties would show compliance and would not carry the case to the law courts. Although the mythology handed down from mouth to mouth does not have religious contents, it becomes a kind of prophecy to those people who hold everything pertaining to their ancestors in the highest respect. It is entirely due to this inherent respect for their ancestors that the ancestral myth is recounted before carrying out the punishment or at the time of settling a dispute. The idea is to employ the will of the ancestors to restrain the actions of their descendants. It is interesting to note that the mythology of the Sheng Miao, meant originally to inform posterity of the stories of their ancestors' life, has also assumed the corrective and preventive functions of law.

773 538 [136] The ancestral myth recorded by this writer consists of three versions, which are scattered over every corner of the Sheng Miao area. Although these versions show some variance, they have the same origin. The original mythology of all ethnic groups is told in verses or songs so that they can be remembered easily by posterity. The first two versions of the ancestral myth are told by the Sheng Miao as prose stories due to the disappearance of the poetical versions in the course of time. The third version is a song sung by the Sheng Miao, and few indeed are those elders in the whole area who can sing the song in its entirety. It therefore still retains all its simple primitive character. The whole song has 488 lines and represents the pure myth of the Sheng Miao regarding the origin of man. The three versions are given as follows.

The First Version

539 There was an old woman who descended from heaven to the earth with a melon seed. She planted this seed on the top of a mountain range. After three days the seed sprouted and the vine extended to more than two feet. After seven days the melon plant covered the whole mountain, yielding many large melons. Among the melons there was the melon king so large that it could accommodate several dozen persons inside. It

[136 cont.]

539 happened that at the time a torrential rain inundated the whole world and drowned all mankind except a brother and sister - their names are not known - who hid themselves in the great melon. The melon floated hither and thither until - we do not know how - it reached heaven. The people in heaven asked the brother and sister to come down to earth and permitted them to become husband and wife. They came down and married but could not find any food to eat. Thereupon they began to eat the melon. At that time they met the old woman, who was the planter of the melon seed. She said to them: "Eating the melon will give you children." Indeed after a while a son was born. But the parents were unhappy with the melon child, and cutting him with a knife into a number of pieces, they scattered them at the foot of a nearby mountain. Afterwards the bones of the melon child became the Miao, the liver became the Sui-chia, and the neck became the T'ung-chia. In addition there were two other pieces, one of which became the [137] Miao king and the other the Han [Chinese] king. The Miao king was named Lao Tung, and the Han king, Lao Li. Lao Tung lived on the highland which included the present Li-p'ing, Yung-ts'ung and Hsia-chiang. Lao Li went down along the river as far as Kwangtung where he settled. His influence extended over a very large area and he became exceedingly prosperous. He asked Lao Tung to join him in Kwangtung, but because the two struggled for the possession of a salt well Lao Li killed Lao Tung. When Lao Tung went to Kwangtung he brought with him two sons, one called Lao Ting and the other Lao Ch'un. After the death of their father they went back to the highlands and settled along the Tzu-wen River (about 10 li from Hsia-chiang) to cultivate the land, and became more and more prosperous. They decided to avenge their father's death and always went down to molest and rob Lao Fu, Lao Li's son. Lao Fu could not stand it any longer and together with Lao Li he went to discuss with them a permanent settlement of their territory. The method for demarcation was to invoke the will of heaven through divination. They agreed to settle down in any place where luck would have them. Being cunning and shrewd, Lao Li and his son Lao Fu had

[137 cont.]

539 previously laid down a plan, according to which one was to hide underneath a big bridge and the other to hold a banner in a mountain cave. They then agreed that they should yell to heaven and see to whom heaven would respond. The favored party would have the first choice. Lao Ting yelled first but there was no response. Then Lao Li yelled. When he yelled at heaven, heaven responded; when he yelled at the earth, the earth echoed. Thus Lao Ting and his brother were again robbed of the fruits of their labor by the father and his son. Being unable to remain at the Tzu-wen River they had to withdraw to the deep mountains (the area occupied by the Sheng Miao today). The Miao along the river then came into contact with Lao Li and his son. Lao Fu further cultivated good relations with the Yao, but became enemies of the T'ung-chia and Sui-chia. Later, on account of repeated disputes they opened a mass meeting at Tu-shan and Li-po, where they decided to have bull fights, *liu-sheng* playing, song-singing, and *huan-ku-chang* [lit., the settlement of old debts] as recreations of the Miao and Yao, and opera singing and the New Year festivities as recreations of the Han [Chinese]. After the meeting the pen used was given to the Chinese and the left-over chicken feet were given to the Miao. Thus the descendants of the Chinese learned to read and write and became officials because their ancestors received the pen. The descendants of the Miao became farmers because their ancestors got the chicken feet. The sons of Lao Ting and Lao Fu were Lao Lüeh and Lao Kao. The events after this are not clear.

[138] The Second Version

In ancient times there were a couple who had six children. The eldest son was called En [blessing]; the second, Liu [thunder]; the third, Hu [tiger]; the fourth, Lung [dragon]; the fifth, Shê [snake]; and the sixth, Mei [fascination]. Soon the father died. The children lived apart according to their responsibilities. En looked after the earth; Lui, the heaven; Hu, the mountain; Lung, the forest; Shê, the cave; sister Mei

[138 cont.]

539 and the old mother lived together with En. Wishing to cultivate the field, En went to heaven to borrow a cow from Lui and promised to return the animal the following year. But after the field was cultivated there was nothing to eat. Therefore, En slaughtered the cow and fed the family. He stuck the tail and the head of the cow in the crevices of a rock outside his house. When Lui asked En for the cow the latter replied, "The rock outside has eaten up the cow." Lui scolded the rock for having eaten the cow, but the rock replied, "En has eaten it, and if you do not believe me, go to his house and search in the wooden tub -- there is still some beef left." Lui became angry and threw down a javelin from the sky to hit En. En was aware of this and had on his back the bark of an old tree. While throwing the javelin Lui was careless and slipped. He fell down to earth and was caught by En, who purposely asked, "Do you prefer to be locked up in a big drum or in an iron store room?" Lui knew that En had a wicked heart and used to beat the drum with a wooden club, and therefore he asked to be locked up in the store room. So Lui was locked up in an iron store room. At the same time En asked Lui to make a red rope, saying that when the whole room was filled with the rope he would be set free. En dug a hole into the store room and drew out the rope from time to time. Lui did not know this trick. After six years of work he still could not fill the room with rope. He could only heave sighs. One day an old man who was looking for manure, passed by. Lui yelled to the man and asked him whether he had seen his javelin. The old man told him that the javelin was tossed by En to the manure pit. Lui begged the old man to retrieve it and clean it for him. When Lui got the javelin he was so happy that he kept on playing with it, yielding flashes of light. The old man outside was stunned. Lui thanked him for his trouble and wished him to be the richest man on earth. With the javelin Lui was able to break open the iron store house and ascended to heaven. At that time En was drawing out the rope to T'ai-nan (ancient Miao locality). When he came back [139] he did not find Lui and became greatly alarmed for he knew Lui would not

[139 cont.]

539 stop there. Lui's hatred for En was very deep and he planned to kill him. He therefore gathered all his magic power and brought about a great flood. Soon the whole world was inundated. En escorted his mother and sister to a stone cave for refuge. He cut for himself a big tree and collected a cluster of bees in a gourd. The flood reached the sky, and En's boat floated down the gateway of Lui's house, just as the latter was rejoicing over the drowning of his enemy. When he heard the sound outside his gate he opened it and was greatly astonished to find En in his boat. En said that the flood could not drown him, but the gourd when heated over the fire would be able to kill him. Lui foolishly believed in his words, and taking the gourd he put it over the fire. The bees in the gourd could not stand the heat and all came out to sting. Lui and all his family were stung, suffering great pains. En said, "For medicine you have to go down to earth." Lui therefore called back the flood and followed En to the earth. En picked up a few frog leaves [?].

"These leaves are neither rare nor strange. In heaven we have them in great abundance," Lui said.

"If I do not lead you down to earth, you would not call back the water," replied En.

Lui recognized En's ability, and the two brothers made peace with each other, promising never to be enemies again. They divided the heaven and earth as their respective spheres of control. At that time the earth, being washed over by the flood, could provide nothing that could be eaten as food, except a grain of rice offered to En by a rat hiding in a hole. En planted the seed and obtained food. Then he thought of a wife and went to ask a little insect.

"Is there any woman left in the world to become my wife?"

The insect replied, "There are only you and your sister, but you two can marry. Let one of you go up the hill and the other go down the hill, each under a parasol. When you meet midway on the hill you two will be like distant cousins coming from two distant places."

The brother and sister actually became husband and wife. After two years they suddenly gave birth to a child without four

[139 cont.]
539 limbs in the shape of a melon. En was furious and cut up his monster child with a big knife into a number of pieces and threw them around on the top of a mountain. The second day when En climbed up the mountain he found that the pieces of flesh had become a number of men and women. Then En set fire to the bamboo, which crackled and exploded. [140] This fire provoked laughter from the men and women on the mountain, who soon uttered sounds and talked in three different languages, the Chinese, the Tung and the Miao.

The Third Version

[128] [Editor's note: The following is a free translation of the original song. In the latter part, a number of verses, mostly repetitious, have been omitted.]

In very ancient times,
Our story must begin,
When men had to build houses
And burn the field for cultivation.

Cutting the trees required
Two days going up the slope,
And one day going downward, -
Spared only was a big tree.

A tumor grew from the tree;
On its branches the birds nested.
No one dared to chop it:
A goat was asked to divine.

The goat said: "Go ahead."
With a hatchet hacking both ways.
And two knives at the same time,
They chopped for two days.

[140 cont.]

539 They hacked a long while
When a wind suddenly came.
Down the tree went crashed,
But the trunk was saved.

The top of the tree fell,
By the ditch side;
The top went rotting out,
But below, the tree continued to grow.

A rat was underneath;
Two birds were atop;
Two insects crawled by,
Making a feeble flop.

When the insects flew down
They were larger than the birds;
The two were same in size,
But two different insects.

They flew to the nest
And five eggs they laid:
White and round and large.
Who was there to hatch?

A little bird came
To ask the right to hatch:
Which egg to hatch first?
For twelve months she brooded.

The little bird chirped,
And looked closely around:
How tiny was her little self,
And food had yet be found.

Hungry and starving,
The bird flew away

[140 cont.]

539

In search of fruits and flowers,
When an eagle she met.

The eagle, wishing to hatch
The eggs, came to inquire.
After eleven months
She cried a few times.

The eagle also felt
She was a bit too small:
Sitting without food,
No longer would she hatch.

And so she flew away
In search of chicks.
Who else next would stay
These little eggs to brood?

Who was the father of the eggs?
Let him come to hatch
These five eggs large and white,
An inscrutable batch.

One egg bore a Dragon in the river
And the Dragon produced a fish;
One egg became Thunder in the sky,
And one En and Mei, who on earth remained.

One egg produced a Tiger,
Another, a Snake,
And they all came to share
The father's wealth on the mountain top.

The land was equally divided
Save a big hilly farm
With seven waterfalls from the cave
Coveted by En and Thunder.

[140 cont.]

539

En and Thunder disagreed
For their share of this land:
In spite of kinship blood
Thunder sent down flood.

En's father was very old,
High- nosed and quite frail;
He sat on a wooden bench,
Eating with chopsticks.

The land was re-apportioned:
Nine thousand ch'ia [a measurement for land?]
Thunder took;
The remaining seventy thousand ch'ia
Were still on the book.

Dragon received the land
Along the river banks:
[141] En had nothing left to take,
And so with a sword he went to cultivate.

To Li-t'ang he soon went
Cucumbers to grow;
The second moon quickly faded,
And fifth moon came in a row.

The cucumbers growing ripe
Were seen by the monkeys wild,
Who removed the bridge
To an alien land.

En's mother had a fall,
And down a deep precipice she rolled:
In the throes of life or death
She had hardly a breath.

For her who was still alive
They each kept watch overnight:

[141 cont.]

539 Who was the lucky fellow
A new field to possess?

One hundred ninety thousand
Mow was the size of the land:
The bin was full of harvest grains
For the sons to put up claims.

Thunder was the eldest son
And came to burn the fuel:
After a whole night's vigil,
Mother was still alive.

She still could take rice;
She still could spin yarn;
Charcoal she still could burn:
But who was the second son?

Dragon was the second son:
So he was called from the river edge
To carry home more fuel;
And firewood was cut on the ledge.

Firewood was taken from the river bank,
And Dragon came to spend the night
When Mother was still up,
Eating rice and doing fine.

Mother could still spin
And weave, and charcoal make:
En was called to come back
With firewood, which he cut on the slope.

A night's vigil En did keep,
But Mother did not die:
He watched until early morn
When the cock began to crow.

[141 cont.]

539 The spacious field En aspired,
The spacious field to till:
With both hands on her neck,
He contrived his aged mother to strangle,
5 To send her to death
With all his strength.

The spacious field En aspired,
The spacious field to till:
A persimmon was found
To smear Mother's body,
The stench was all around
And she had to be buried.

The coffin was made of iron
And steel too was used;
In heaven her burial should take place
When the coffin lid was sealed.

Dragon too wanted
To have her entombed
In a stone coffin
By the river bank.

But there was sister Mei,
Who made Mother's clothes.
On earth she wished Mother to be,
Where she could be within reach.

Oh, our poor Mother!
Don't believe in Thunder,
Dragon was unkind,
Mei only was to be trusted.

Trees had to be felled
And rice seedlings planted;
The foliage cast its shade
And the trees had to be cut.

[141 cont.]

539

Four planks of pinewood
Were all that the coffin had,
To be carried to the village
And there safely buried.

Once more the field became
A subject of contention:
Who was to lay claim on the field
That yielded nine bins of grain.

Who was the eldest brother?
Who was the first to decide?
If worse should come to the worst,
All the brothers should abide.

And so Thunder made his claim,
But the brothers railed:
When Thunder went up to heaven,
It rained, it thundered, it hailed.

En came forth to say:
"This field brings ill luck;
Second brother, Dragon, may
In turn make his claim."

Dragon could not make up his mind,
And so to the river he rushed,
[142] Breaking the embankment --
And all about was laid waste.

En came forth to say:
"This field brings ill luck."
He wished sister Mei
Would at last save the day.

And so the sister said:
"Two months have passed,
All the grass is dead --
Let the cat go down the ditch to have a look."

[142 cont.]

539 For this a light was lit
To show the cat around:
En was at last asked
To take a final look.

En with another fire
Was ready to proceed;
But the cat turned around
To report to Thunder.

Snake too was asked,
But En knew it all;
Lighting a straw torch,
He set fire in his wake.

The fire soon spread everywhere,
And the country was a waste.
The cat ran for dear life,
And snake as well made haste,

While Dragon plunged deep into the water,
But Thunder alone was not afraid;
He sat down, waiting
For the fire him to overtake.

The fire was fast approaching,
Destroying, devastating;
When the heat grew too strong,
Thunder skyward dashed along.

High up in the sky
Rain water was kept,
While to earth it was denied;
So the field was parched.

The earth was all cracked
And walking was a pain;

[142 cont.]

And water Thunder held,
Up in the sky.

Without water the field
Refused to yield:
En decided to ascend to heaven
To Thunder to plead.

It was in the ninth month
When rain was released,
The field was eased;
And the fish swam about.

But En was so selfish;
He ate all the fish:
When Thunder came down,
All the fish were gone.

Thunder was really angry now:
When to heaven he went back
He took with him the only cow
That tilled the field.

Without the cow En was forlorn:
And he took a dog to help him;
The dog kept barking all the day
Without doing work in the field.

Thunder, looking down from heaven,
Could not resist laughter:
En once more was high and dry --
A good lesson for hereafter.

And so once more En implored
Forgiveness and his cow.
Thunder gave him the cow
To work on the earth.

[142 cont.]

539

After the field was ploughed,
En killed the cow for food
Just as Thunder was coming down to earth
To drive the cow to its heavenly home.

That cow deserved death,
So En told Thunder;
It went grazing on a cliff,
Fell down, and was devoured by the cliff.

Now En thought of Thunder's wife,
And up to heaven he went.
But she loved En not,
For Thunder only she desired.

When Thunder returned home,
In anger he roared:
Wicked was En to have robbed my field,
Seized my cow and coveted my wife.

Thunder vowed vengeance: for these wrongs
En had to pay with his life.
Thunder was to let loose a terrific flood,
Overflowing heaven and earth.

En had built a small house,
But Thunder had kicked it to pieces.
Another hut En had built
And again it had been destroyed.

So En went to ask Mother Goose;
She urged En to build a bamboo hut
To be thatched with palm leaves
And covered with green moss.

[142 cont.]

539 Next time when Thunder kicked,
He slipped in an awful fall.
Once more Thunder was entrapped,
And in an iron bin he was laid.

En went out to a far land
To seek as much silver
As he could get to buy salt
With which to pickle Thunder.

Alone in the house was Mei,
Making soup to wash her hair.
She left the soup by the bin,
And when Thunder had it,
His strength he soon regained;
Once more the earth he shook.

Ascending his heavenly domain,
He gave Mei a little seed.
The seed sprouted and grew
Into a melon as big as a bin.

To punish En, Thunder struck
With rain and storm and hail:
Men sought shelter, trying to duck
The rage of Thunder without avail.

The hailstones were like water pails;
Some as big as wooden tables.
Down they fell in endless streams,
Playing havoc on men and houses.

Old men were killed in their beds;
Eighty thousand people were drowned.
The water reached heaven,
Flooding everyone except En.

[143 cont.]

539

En gathered three pumpkins:
Inside one he hid himself;
The other two were for his dog and the bees.
With these he sailed up to heaven.

When En arrived at Thunder's gate,
A challenge he sent:
"If these melons you can break,
A conqueror you would be."

When the melons were opened,
A host of bees hidden there
Came swarming helter-skelter,
And Thunder's wife was stung.

A small insect triedto make peace,
And told Thunder that the flood had to cease:
[144] When En returned to the earth,
Thunder and lightning were all around.

When the earth was by lightning struck,
Mountain ridges all grew up:
But all the world was a barren waste,
Save an eagle flying in haste.

En stopped the eagle and asked:
"Is there somewhere a woman left?"
"The feud of you brothers has made a mess,
And woman there's none, I confess."

And so En inquired of an old dame,
Who said Mei and En should married be:
With the world bereft of human beings,
Brother and sister were to be united.

[144 cont.]

539 From this wedlock came a son,
Without eyes and without ears, --
No more, no less, like a melon he looked --
And the parents were all in tears.

En cut the monster into lumps,
And tossed them around high and low,
They became the Sui-chia and the Chuang,
And the Nine Tribes.

All the people in the world
Were originally unable to speak;
They knew not how to eat rice
Or to enjoy the joys of sex.

En boiled some beans to eat as rice,
And soon he broke wind.
The Han [Chinese] cried "ch'ih-fan";
The Tung, "chi-kou";

The Miao, "no-nüeh";
All meaning "eating rice."
After this the Han, Miao, and Tung,
They all had speech.

3. Conclusions

773 Based on these three versions of the Miao myth, the following points deserve attention.

1. It is without doubt that though superficially the three versions seem different, they actually originate from the same story, altered here and there by later story-tellers. The common theme of these versions is: "Once in ancient times there was a flood, which destroyed all mankind except a brother and sister, who escaped from the disaster. After the flood had subsided, brother and sister were forced to marry each other. They bore a son who looked like a melon. In anger the father cut it into

[144 cont.]

773 pieces and tossed them around, which became the different racial groups today." This kind of myth is not a special story of the Sheng Miao as the other Miao groups investigated by the writer have similar versions. That it is a common ancestral myth of the Miao is worthy of our notice.

2. The earliest people, according to the three versions, were a brother and sister. The first version does not give their names. The second and the third versions give En as the name of the brother and Mei as that of the sister. ~~Probably in~~ ancient stories only these two names were given. After their marriage they procreated different groups of the human race. En and Mei were the original ancestors of mankind. The ethnic groups in China today, the Chinese, the Miao, the Tung, the Sui-chia, the Chuang, and the Yao all came from a common ancestry. That the Sheng Miao mythology contains this unexpected scientific view of the "common origin of man" is also worth noticing.

3. We understand that totemism is a necessary stage in the development of all races. The myth of a common ancestral birth must be associated somehow with totemism, such as the Chinese myth relating to the birth of Shang [founder of Shang or Yin, the first historical Chinese dynasty] from a black bird. The story in the third version regarding two big insects that laid five eggs, which became Dragon, Tiger, Snake, Thunder, En and Mei, shows that the Sheng Miao had already come into contact with totemism. The second version also states that a certain couple had six children, Dragon, Tiger, Snake, Thunder, En and Mei. The Sheng Miao have no inhibition at all in identifying their ancestry with animals. Truly according to modern biological [146] studies, men and animals were originally related, and the Sheng Miao have shown this conception
773 in their mythology. Again, in the above myth, not only
778 was En a supernatural being who could ascend to heaven
and descend to earth with ease, but natural objects such as thunder and rocks, and animals such as dragon, snake, tiger, rat, insects, birds, eagle, monkey, cat and goose were all personified. The ancient belief that they are endowed with human will and intelligence, capable of speaking and taking

[146 cont.]
773 part in other activities still remains with the Sheng Miao today.
776 Thunder, dragon, tiger, and rocks are all important objects of
worship, to which they sacrifice devoutly as if these were gods.
Thunder especially is considered as a majestic god, and every
[821] time when thunder roars in the heavens they would immediately
stop work and inquire who has provoked his anger for fear that
the dreaded flood in their mythology would descend upon them
again. Every year during the time of spring thunder, there is
[796] held a special ritual called "genhou," when all work is stopped
for three days to avert the disaster from heaven.

4. The story of a monstrous birth through incestuous mar-
171 riage which serves to limit consanguineous marriage, is com-
773 mon with most primitive peoples. The foregoing myth also tells
of a melon-shaped child born of a wedlock between En and Mei,
who are brother and sister. It is conceded by many historians
that marriages among the earliest peoples were incestuous. In
the mythology of the Sheng Miao the brother and sister got
married because mankind was destroyed by the flood, and they
had no alternative but to marry each other even though they
were fully aware of the impropriety of the union. The marriage
was advised by an old dame and a little insect, who told them
to proceed from opposite directions, each holding an umbrella
and with leaves covering up their eyes, and upon meeting, to
call each other "lao piao" [lit., old cousin]. In a similar way
when a brother and sister among the savage people of Polynesia
are united in marriage, they call each other "pu-na-lu-ya"
(dear ones) instead of brother and sister. [147] Nevertheless it
was an incestuous marriage, and the melon child was the re-
sult. The fact that today there is still such a conception among
773 the Sheng Miao shows the existence of this marriage system in
the past. Although they now avoid marriages between the same
surnames and between people of the same village, the
[177] acquisition of their surnames from the Chinese is comparatively
[551] of recent origin. Moreover, their acceptance of marriages
[588] between cousins makes us suspect that there are still cases of
incestuous union among them.

[147 cont.]

5. In the above three stories, there are intimations of the
773 enmity between the various tribal groups and the origin of the
ill-feeling between them. For instance in the first version the
sons of the Miao king and the Han king struggled for the
possession of land; the former who were clumsy and ignorant
were taken advantage of by the latter, who were shrewd and
cunning. In the second and third versions, the story of the
brothers Thunder and En fighting repeatedly for the field, the
former violent and belligerent, and the latter wicked and deceitful,
possess the same significance. The most interesting
773 part of the first version has to do with the acquisition of a large
829 area of land by the Han king and the subsequent convention at
Tu-shan, in which the Chinese acquired a pen and was able to
read, write and become officials, whereas the Miao king lost
ground and retired to the mountains with the chicken feet left
over from the meeting, and could only work hard by ploughing
the field in the mountains. This is given as the reason why at
present the Chinese are successful and the Miao are retarded.

6. The amusing section in the second and the third versions
773 as to how the different tribes began to talk should interest the
linguists. When En tossed the piece of flesh around, the human
beings coming out of them were at first unable to speak. In
the second version En happened to burn the bamboo. In the third
version he broke wind after a bean meal; both the noises of
breaking wind and cracking bamboo stirred the human beings into
talking. They spoke three different languages which became
those of the Tung, the Miao and the Chinese. I wonder whether
this would explain that at the time of human origin the differences
between the races were due to the differences in languages.
Furthermore, the earliest vocabulary of all races was related to
food matters. In the third version, [148] the first words they
uttered such as "ch'ih-fan" by the Chinese, "chi-kou" by the
Tung, and "no-nüeh" by the Miao all have the same meaning
of "eating rice" in different pronunciations. This is just like our
teething infants who upon learning to speak, first learn the words
"ch'ih-fan." How thought-provoking all this is!

[148 cont.]

[114] (First published in She-hui yen-chiu [Sociological Studies], No. 20, March 25, 1941.)

[180]

The Festivals of the Miao-I at An-shun

Ch'en Kuo-chün

805 796 The calendar used by the various Miao-I tribes at An-shun is the lunar calendar, but as a rule nobody remembers dates or knows the exact time of the New Year's day, those having almanacs at home being very few. To count the days they generally use the symbolic animals of the twelve cyclical branches, -- rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, cock, dog and boar -- because the markets are held on days named after these animals. But those who can calculate the days according to them are very few. Indeed the majority of the people do not even know the day and month in which they were born. The occurrence of an event on a particular day cannot be recalled with accuracy a month hence, and after a year it is relegated to limbo with at most perhaps a vague notion that it took place at the time of peach blossom, or in the planting season, or during harvest time.

796 Although the calendar used by the Miao-I is identical to that of the Chinese and likewise the year is divided into twelve months, the festivals observed are somewhat different in importance. The Hua Miao, the Ch'ing Miao and the Chung-chia, for instance, regard the sixth day of the sixth month as the greatest festival. The following is a month by month account of the festivals of the Miao-I at An-shun during the year.

The First Month. The first day of the first month is the beginning of the year. The Miao-I in this district would stick up paper money on the door of the house, which is also decorated with red peppers strung together with scented rice straw. Some of the Chung-chia people imitate the Chinese by asking calligraphers to pen symmetrical New Year verses for the door,

[180 cont.]
796 and then hang out knots of scented rice straw, but no red
peppers. These decorations are in expectation of a prosperous
year.

After having celebrated "The Big Year" on the thirtieth
day of the twelfth month and having decorated the door on the
New Year's day, the Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao would re-
main at home to rest without doing any work. The food for the
New Year was prepared in advance on a lucky day (dragon and
[777] dog days are lucky), and it is not cooked again until another
lucky day comes around. [181] So on New Year's day there is
no kitchen drudgery as only pre-cooked meals are eaten. The
[784] New Year's day being the first of the year, everything has to be
auspicious and inhibitions are many. For instance, 1) no sewing
is done by women at home; 2) nothing is taken into the house
from outside; 3) no water is carried; 4) no knife is used; 5) no
one is allowed to go barefooted and shoes must be worn; 6) no
cursing is allowed; 7) no rapping on the wall is allowed; 8) the
floor must not be swept; 9) no collection of debt is permitted.
Besides, there are the proverbial "three days of liberty" when
[527] parents would allow their sons and daughters unrestrained freedom
[593] in the pursuit of recreation and happiness on the first, second
and third days of the year. After this period the children once
more submit themselves to parental restraint. On the first day
of the year the old and young are clothed in new garments and
have fun all day long. Only the Hsiung and Yang families
769 among the Ch'ing Miao have the custom of worshipping ancestors
796 in the evening. At the time of the sacrifice, the head of the
family would spread a straw mat on the floor of the middle room
or the side room and place on it incense and candles as well as
three bowls of rice. In each bowl is pitched a piece of pork on a
bamboo stick with three straw knots to represent the ancestors.
In addition there are three bowls of beancurd and three pieces of
tz'u-pa [glutinous rice balls]. They call out aloud to ask their
ancestors to pass the New Year with them. Then the male
members of the family begin to kowtow in the order of their
age. After the paper money is completely burned, they gather
up the things on the straw mat. The rice straw and the bamboo

[181 cont.]

796 sticks are thrown into the temple of the Earth God outside the
[769] village.

The New Year activities of the Chung-chia are slightly different from those of the Hua Miao and Ch'ing-Miao. On the first day of the year they also wear new clothes and decorate their doorway. At about seven o'clock in the morning they make sacrifices to their ancestors in the hall with several bowls of rice and meat while incense and candles are burned and firecrackers are set off. The whole family, old and young, male and female, all participate in the ceremony as they perform the ritual of "three kneelings and nine kowtows." After the sacrifice, the family settles down to a New Year feast in the hall, after which they stop working and laugh and joke all day. Their restrictions are similar to those of the Hua Miao and Ch'ing Miao. But the Chung-chia have a peculiar superstition that if
[787] on the first day of the year a dog should bark after cockcrow, there would surely be a robbery in the village; and if the crow caws first, there would surely be many sicknesses among them during the year; on the other hand, if another animal should make a noise before the dog and the crow, then there would be a very lucky year ahead. All these superstitious notions are firmly believed in by the Chung-Chia, and for this reason early in the morning of the New Year's day all the families would cock their ears to listen to the bird or animal that first makes noise.

[182] On the second day of the New Year, the Hua Miao
241 and the Ch'ing Miao would gather their family members after
796 breakfast and with spades on their shoulders and wearing straw hats they would march off to their farms to do a little ploughing and digging, the idea being that this first "earth-removing" inaugurates a year's agricultural activities. With the Chung-chia, there is no definite day for the beginning of farm work, but it is generally around the tenth day of the first month.

During the first three days of the year the Hua Miao, the
796 Ch'ing Miao and the Chung-chia would all stay home without going out for fear of meeting with unlucky events. On the
[574] fourth day the villages become astir with New Year visits between

[182 cont.]

796 friends and relatives, and the younger generations pay respects to
574 their elders (The New Year gifts for the children vary from ten to twenty cents.) When they exchange visits and greetings they
[431] bring with them a couple of home-made tz'u pa (each about 1 sheng of rice), candies and refreshments as gifts. The host and hostesses must entertain the visitors with tea and wine. The tenant farmers also present similar New Year gifts to their landlords, who in return would give them pieces of cloth or other household articles. As a rule such New Year greetings do not extend beyond the twelfth day though intimate relatives may offer theirs until the fifteenth. If a relative who has kept up these New Year visits throughout the past years fails to turn up, the family will be greatly offended. The Miao-I take the New Year greetings very seriously, and hence they should not be neglected.

The Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao in the hsien district
796 have a custom of flower dance. There is a fixed location for the
535 dancing ground, called the "flower bed." The dates for flower dances are set according to schedules in various places, and are generally between the fourth and the fifteenth day of the first month. On this occasion visitors gather like clouds in great jubilation, and it is indeed the most important festival of the Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao throughout the year.

The fifteenth day of the first month is the "Small New
796 Year" with the Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao. That evening they put in front of the doorway a small table, on which are placed as sacrificial offerings a bowl of rice, a piece of meat and a cup of rice wine. Burning incense and lighting candles, they would kneel down and pray: "We pray to the Buddha tonight to guide us this year smoothly to wealth and prosperity." After the prayer, the old and young, except the womenfolk, worship in turn. Then they sit down together for a feast in the hall. After dinner they have fun for the rest of the evening. The Chung-chia celebrate the "Small New Year" on the thirtieth day of the first month. Besides other delicacies at the table,
[262] every family makes tz'u-pa balls fried in oil, known as "eating
[769] oil balls." They make sacrifices to their ancestors in great piety.

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796 The Second Month. In the second month all New Year
festivities are over, and every one among the Miao-I must at-
[461] tend to his duties. If one does not work during the second month,
he is adjudged an idler and is ridiculed.

In the middle of the second month, four or five days after
769 the beginning of spring [Feb. 5-18] according to the lunar
796 calendar, the Miao-I in the district have a custom similar to the
Chinese there. Any tomb that is not yet three years old is visited by one or two male members of the family with a basket which contains a tray of beancurd, a piece of fried tz'u-pa, a tray of pork, a cup of wine, a bowl of rice, a pair of candles, nine sticks of incense and some paper money. These are offered in sacrifice. A small number of rich families would lay out a feast at the graveyard, and this is called "lan-shê."

The Third Month. On the third day of this month the Miao-I
[262] eat tz'u-pa made of buckwheat flour called "ch'iao-erh-pa."
In the Ching-ming season [April 5-19] they sweep the grave, a custom known as "hanging the paper." They stick new willow twigs on their door. On the Ch'ing-ming day they first visit the public grave (the oldest grave of the original ancestor), and then their private graves. In preparation for the visit to the public grave they buy collectively a huge pig as well as candles and incense, firecrackers, wine and delicacies. Members of the entire clan in the village go there to make sacrifices, after which they feast themselves at the grave. After the visit to the public grave they separately prepare items of sacrifice to be offered at their private graves. There are also a small number of rich families who would set up several dozen tables of feasts at the family graveyard to entertain the guests. A few days later, if the wind is mild and the weather fine, the mountain side would be dotted with men and women promenading and enjoying nature.

The Fourth Month. The eighth day of this month is ob-
served as a "Buddha-bathing festival" by the local Chinese. The
Chung-chia in the hsien district would set up their ancestral tablets,
make tz'u-pa, prepare wine and meat, and burn incense for
796 sacrifice. The Chung-chia in this district as well as the Ku-
231 huang Miao (one branch of the Hua Miao) in four or five areas

[183 cont.]
796 consider this day as the birthday of the cow-king, and so all the
[231] cows in the field have a day of rest.

The Fifth Month. The fifth day of this month is the Tuan-yang festival, also known locally as "Tuan-wu." The Miao-I families in the hsien district would steam glutinous rice on the fourth day and mash it into tz'u-pa the next morning. Every
[262] member of the family would receive a few pieces and these are eaten with maple sugar and crushed bean paste in the place of meals for that day. But it is [184] not a holiday and they still work as usual in the fields. Recently many Miao-I imitate the Chinese by hanging rush and artemisia leaves at the door, and at
[262] noon time they drink realgar wine and eat glutinous rice dumplings [wrapped in bamboo leaves] and noodles instead of rice.

[243] After the transplantation of rice-plants in the fourth and fifth months and at the time of their flowering (called locally "yang flowers") in the seventh and eighth months, the Hua
[535] Miao and the Ch'ing Miao both have a dancing festival as festive as the New Year flower dance.

The Sixth Month. The temples of the local gods in all the Chinese and Miao-I villages in the district are scenes of great celebration on the sixth day of this month. The Miao-I build
[346] their local temples outside the village gate, and on this day they would hold processions in honor of the Earth God. The day before, the village head prepared in advance a big pig and many varieties of meats and vegetables. On the sixth day all the items of sacrifice are carried to the village gate and deposited there in front of the Earth God temple. After setting off the firecrackers, every family takes turns to perform a ritual before the temple. After the sacrifice the pork is divided up among the families, the quantity being designated by each family to be paid for in grain after the autumn harvest. The remainder of the pork together with the other meats and vegetables are cooked together on the spot in a huge cauldron and eaten by all the people present. After feasting each family brings home a small quantity of pork, from which a piece is cut off for sacrifice on the border of one's field. A string of paper money is also stuck there as a token to

[184 cont.]
796 invoke a prosperous harvest. In the afternoon every family con-
tributes a few dimes for the purchase of vegetables and sends a
representative to the party, at which rules and regulations are
[685] discussed regarding indemnities for damages to crops. He who
[212] can write is asked to list the rules on a piece of white paper to
be affixed at the village gate. Then on the top of a high mound
near the village they set up a straw mark and let loose a din of
firecrackers to announce to villages far and near that this village
has already passed its laws so that none may go there to violate
them.

On this day[1] the number of people making sacrifices before
769 the Earth God temple among the Chung-chia is also large, but
796 in addition each family has to prepare separate glutinous rice
dumplings and a chicken for sacrifice to the ancestors. In the
afternoon the children would bring dumplings and chicken legs
to some nearby river banks to enjoy themselves. Toward evening
they would wash their hands and feet in the river before coming
home, and this is called "the first wash."

The Seventh Month. The first dragon day of this month is
the "new crop festival." On this day all the children of the Hua
Miao and Ch'ing Miao [185] wear new clothes. In the morning
they would go to the field, each plucking three bunches of grain
stalks, which they cook in rice. They also cook a few ears of
corn with some blue fish for sacrifice to the ancestors. After the
ritual the whole family would sit down to a meal of new rice and
796 corn. The custom of the Chung-chia is similar, except that
[231] after the sacrifice the new rice and corn are first fed to the dog
of the house before they are eaten by men. According to their
[773] tradition, it is said that at the time of creation there was no
rice in the world, and that a dog brought the seed from heaven
for men to plant. It was only then that people had rice for food.
So on the "new crop day" each year rice is first fed to the dog
to show that his benefaction has not been forgotten. Among the
Chung-chia there is another superstition: from the "new crop
day" to the time of the autumn harvest no one in the house, old
or young, may sit on the doorsill so as to avoid misfortune.

[1] [i.e., the sixth day of the sixth month.—Analyst]

[185 cont.]

796 789 *The Eighth Month.* The fifteenth day of this month is the mid-autumn festival. The local Chinese have the custom of making offerings to the moon, which the Miao-I do not have. Before this date, however, some frolicsome fellows among them might steal a pumpkin from somebody's yard and on the eve of the fifteenth day would dress it up into the likeness of an infant, complete with garment and shoes, and wrap it inside a dress. While one man carries the pumpkin, another would walk behind, simulating baby talk or baby cry. They also carry with them different eatables and visit neighbors and relatives who do not have children. On arriving, they would set off firecrackers and then knock at the door to ask for entrance. The childless family, knowing the visit in advance, would prepare a feast to entertain the visitors in the hall. After entering the house, the visitors would take the pumpkin to an inner chamber and place it on a bed, imitating at the same time a child's crying. One visitor would then spit into the bed and exclaim: "The baby is wet!" On hearing this noise the owner of the house dashes into the room and invites the visitors to the feast. This performance is commonly known as "presenting the old pumpkin," and is regarded by childless couples as a good omen for childbearing. If in the future the recipient should actually give birth to a son, the pumpkin bearers would be treated to another feast.

273 796 *The Ninth Month.* The ninth day of the ninth month is the *Ch'ung-yang* festival. On this day the Miao-I families within the district all eat *tz'u-pa* and make wine, known as *Ch'ung-yang* wine. It is said that the wine made on this day is especially delicious in taste and can last for a whole year without becoming weak.

796 *The Tenth Month.* No festivals.

The Eleventh Month. No festivals.

[312] [279] [186] *The Twelfth Month.* The eighth day of this month is known as "La-pa," on which the Miao-I have the custom of competing for the first bucket of water. The bearers are all women, who rise early in the morning to go to the nearest well to draw the first bucketful of water to carry home. It is used to cook rice for the animals, to wash the women's hair, and to brew

M [186 cont.]

796 [278] tea. It is said that this tea, when drunk by old folks, can cure coughing. On this La-pa day the families cook the soft congee M [262] rice [chou], known as "la-pa-chou," instead of the hard, dry rice. This custom is the same as that of the local Chinese.

The last day of the twelfth month is the day to banish all M [777] bad luck, and is known as the "Big New Year Eve." On this day all the Miao-I families do a thorough house-cleaning. They go to the mountain to collect bamboo branches and tie them in a bundle to be used as a broom to brush away the dust accumulated during the year. They also wash their household implements and utensils, and thus tidy up the whole house to give it a completely new look both inside and outside. In the morning they make tz'u-pa to feed the cow and buy from the village fair many varieties of New Year delicacies. In the evening they put wine and food outside the gate as offerings to heaven and earth and their ancestors. After the sacrifice they gather together for dinner in the house. They pick out some rice and meat from the table to feed the dog. After dinner the elder of the house distributes cash presents to the children. No one goes to bed on the New Year Eve as candles burn, firecrackers resound, and singing and music from the reed-organ rend the air the whole night until dawn. This is known as keeping the vigil of the year.

M [114] (This article was published in She-hui yen-chiu, No. 35, October 22, 1941.)

[190] The Drum Tower in the Tung-chia Area

Ch'en Kuo-chün

S 161 The southern border region of Kweichow province has a subtropical climate and food from nature is comparatively easy to obtain. There the life of the Miao-I people is easier and their physiological growth is faster than that in other Miao-I areas in Kweichow. For this reason the population in this district increases

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161 rapidly among the Hê Miao, Tung-chia, Sui-chia, Chung-chia and
Chuang-chia, of whom the Hê Miao represent the greatest majority,
and next the Tung-chia. According to our estimate there are
about 150,000 Tung-chia people at Yung-chiang, Hsia-chiang,
Yung-ts'ung, Li-p'ing, Chien-ho, T'ien-chu, Chin-p'ing and
San-sui; and if the Tung-chia in Kwangsi and Hunan are included the number would be above 200,000.

The Tung-chia is a branch of the I tribe. Their language
101 resembles that of the Chung-chia and Sui-chia while their customs are taken largely from the Hê Miao. Generally speaking,
their cultural level is between the Sui-chia and the Hê Miao.
They call themselves "Nin Kam," the word "Nin" meaning man
and similar to the Chinese word "人" in sound [i.e., according to the southern pronunciation] and meaning, but we do not
know the meaning of the word "Kam." They claim, however,
that their ancestors originated from a certain place in Kiangsi
province, but after long years the family genealogies are lost.
The name for Kiangsi is known for short as "Kan" [贛], but in
the ancient book Kuang-yün [Comprehensive Rhyming Dictionary], the T'ang [7th to 10th century] pronunciation for the word
is given as "Kam." Today the people at Lin-ch'uan, Nan-feng,
Ning-tu, Chin-hsien and Tung-hsiang in Kiangsi province still
read the word "贛" as "Kam," and this agrees quite well with
what the Tung-chia call themselves. It raises an interesting
question of whether the Tung-chia are actually natives of
Kiangsi, which calls for discussion elsewhere. The present
344 article is limited to a description of the drum towers in the
Tung-chia villages, which are giant structures that attract people's attention. In many aspects of Tung-chia life, these towers
are [191] centers of activities.

Every Tung-chia village has a drum tower, built on a vacant lot within the village limits, the larger villages having two or three. Known in the Tung-chia language as "da-ler," the tower either assumes the shape of a square pavilion or the form of a pagoda. They are square at the bottom, which measures about 200 square feet. It has from two to twenty stories, measuring from 30 to above 100 feet in height. On the four sides there are more than a dozen wooden pillars, encircling it on each

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344 side like balustrades, with an entrance to the interior, which has corridors for passage. In the center a huge and tall pillar reaches to the roof, which hangs up like an umbrella. From the top of the [534] roof is hung a large drum, hollowed out from some big tree trunk, its two ends covered with new hides. To reach the top from the ground one climbs up the pillar for there are no staircases. But this is not a difficult feat for the Tung-chia men, who are all light-footed. The roof of every story is covered with tiles, and on the planked walls are carved latticed windows in various designs and slightly decorated with colors. The construction of these drum towers is undertaken by the artisans among the Tung-chia themselves, and the cost of construction is born by the whole village in equal proportions. The amount of money involved is quite large. For this reason the drum towers in the Tung-chia villages were all built long ago. They do not tear down old towers to build new ones unless they are destroyed by fire. Every year only some repair work is done.

It is said that the drum towers in the Tung-chia villages are as old as the villages themselves and hence full of historical interest. The towers were built for several purposes: as a public meeting place and as a center for gossip, for people warming themselves at the fire in case of cold weather, for keeping the night vigil and for singing and recreation.

Whenever there is an emergency that requires a public 202 623 meeting, the drum tower keeper, also known as messenger (or footman, who receives as remuneration from the village 1,000 catties of grain a year), would climb up the wooden pillar to beat the drum at the top, crying loudly at the same time. The tempo and the number of the beats vary according to a fixed set of rules. The "tum, tum" beats can be heard within a radius of many li. The first drum beat signifies a call for a meeting for some important affair, and upon hearing it, the villagers would abandon their work to listen attentively. [192] The second drum beat is an urgent call to gather together at the drum tower, and the third drum beat is a signal for the meeting to start. Ordinarily, after 623 the third beat each family would have without fail a representative at the drum tower. At the meeting the old people would have the

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623 floor first to state the facts and express their opinions. Then they huddle up to discuss the matter and reach a decision, after which they turn around to ask the young people whether or not they agree. In general, though policy decision is made by the elders, its execution is undertaken by the young, and therefore the approval of the latter is necessary. At the meeting they squat around helter-skelter, seemingly confused and without any procedure, but the spirit animating the meeting has a special merit. They have complete freedom of speech, anyone being able to express his opinion to his heart's content. The young as a
[888] rule have high respects for the old, and recognizing the latter's extensive knowledge, they are willing to leave all the decisions to the elders without offering any opinion of their own. They believe that they are only good for carrying out the decisions. So on all important affairs the old people express their ideas, and when approved by the young, the work is distributed and assigned for action without delay.

646 If a certain village has a most serious affair, such as banditry, the meeting would then be different from that stated above. The Tung-chia call this meeting "Ch'uan-k'uan [summoning for conditions], which means to summon all elders from various villages to discuss conditions. The meeting place is still at the drum tower. The procedure of "Ch'uan-k'uan"
[202] consists of the dispatch of a piece of wood (known in the Tung-chia language as ch'a) about one foot long and as large as a staff, on which is written the name of the elder to be summoned and the nature of the business. Those qualified for summoning are all village leaders who can direct the villagers. Ordinarily, such contacts have been established before and so on receipt of the wooden tablet the leaders would come immediately at the
[579] specified time. The purpose of such summons is for collective defense against brigandage. Therefore at the time of the summons, each village would send over all its young men. But there are also evil elements who use the summon for ulterior purposes. The decisions reached by the participants at the meeting are final, and no one can oppose them. The wronged

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646 party has to swallow the bitter pill: he may become angry but
he may not protest. He who violates the decision of the sum-
[689] moned assembly not only subjects his life to danger but also
his property to confiscation. [193] Mob psychology is blindfold,
and often at such a meeting some cunning and wicked person
would accuse a victim, declaring that he should be killed or his
house searched and his property confiscated. If the mob should
cry out assent, the matter is not further inquired into and the
decision is carried out. The original intention of the summoned
assembly is good, but it can be easily abused by the cunning and
the wicked. Therefore the system is fraught with grave dangers,
and has created many conflicts and crimes. It is hoped that the
government would step in to outlaw the system.

Besides being an assembly ground, the drum tower is also
521 a recreation center. In between work the adult men, tired of
the monotonous life at home, would go to the drum tower in
groups of threes and fives among relatives and neighbors to talk
about anything on their mind from the high heaven down to
earth, smoking tobacco all the while. Time flies quickly. This
is just like the Chinese sitting in tea houses or wine shops to
pass the time. In cold weather the center fire pit in the drum
tower has always a wood fire burning to keep the villagers warm.
In summer or winter they can make use of the drum tower to
while away the long and endless night. When tired of talking they
prostrate themselves on the bench and fall asleep till daybreak.

The drum tower is also the post for the night watch. Every
625 night three or four able-bodied men, bearing arms, hunting
rifles, ammunition, etc., would keep vigil at the drum tower,
crying every hour [lit., several tens of minutes]: "Bandits are
coming -- do not fall asleep." All through the night one hears
these intermittent strange calls, the idea being to prevent the
guards themselves from falling asleep, and the bandits, from
coming if they should hear such calls and know that the whole
village is on the alert. This is like beating the grass with a
stick to scare the snakes away. But if the bandits actually come,
the watchmen would then climb up the tower to beat the drum,
awaking all the able-bodied men in the village to give the
bandits a good fight.

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The men and women among the Tung-chia have a fondness for singing and sitting in the moonlight. Ordinarily such enjoyment is indulged in at home. But during the leisure time between farm work they would gather at the drum tower every night, often inviting the young folks from other villages. When the number is large they would divide into groups and sing alternately. In the middle of the tower a big fire keeps burning, lending lustre to the scene. Rows of long and low benches encircle the fire and the listeners fill all empty spaces. Men and women sing separately in two groups, each consisting of nine persons or more. All the songs are sung alternately by each group, first the women, then the men, and then again the women. They sing till the middle of the night, and sometimes when excited, [194] they sing until daybreak.

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To sum up, the drum tower is the center of activities in a Tung-chia village, and therefore a factor of great importance in their life. The drum tower is also the only dignified structure in the village, adding much grandeur and beauty to the surrounding scene. Structures similar to the drum tower may be found among all ethnic groups, such as those in India, the South Seas, Indochina, Burma, Thailand, Yunnan and Tibet, but the latter are all dedicated to Buddha or in commemoration of the spirits.

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[195]

The Recreation Activities of the Miao-I at An-shun

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Ch'en Kuo-chün

The living conditions of the Miao-I at An-shun are much worse than those of the local Chinese. Their work is heavy without respite. But fortunately they have various kinds of recreational activities to help them to relax from the drudgery of their life.

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517 535 According to our investigations the Miao-I at An-shun have many kinds of recreation, of which the most important are the flower dance, the market dance, the moon dance, the "kan-piao," singing and playing musical instruments. These are discussed separately as follows.

535 527 (I) The Flower Dance. The Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao in the An-shun area hold flower dances every year. This is an important collective recreation of the Miao during the farming holidays. We have asked the Miao people about the purpose of the flower dance. Their answer is that when Lord Hsüan of the Wei state in the Chou Dynasty built a new terrace to flirt with the woman of Ch'i, he inaugurated the flower dance for the Miao. The method of the flower dance is said to have been created by Yang-lu (considered the original ancestor of the Hua Miao). A local proverb has it that "if the Miao do not flower-dance, the grains will not sprout." The superstition that the flower dance can bring about a prosperous harvest is the result of a low-cultured tradition. All the Miao people believe in it wholeheartedly today as they did of old.

Among the Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao, the time of the flower dance is generally in the first month of the lunar year, the dates varying slightly with different flower slopes (that is, the places where they dance), and depending upon the time when such places were first established. But once fixed, they cannot be changed later. According to our investigation, the locations for the dance are usually the most populated areas. There are altogether seven dancing slopes within the An-shun area, five for the Hua Miao and two for the Ch'ing Miao. The locations and the dates are listed below in the following table:

[196]

Locations	Dates	Tribes
East Gate Hamlet outside East Gate	First month: 7th, 8th, 9th	Hua Miao
Upper Village outside South Gate	First month: 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th	Ch'ing Miao

[196 cont.]

Locations	Dates	Tribes
527 Flower Dance Hill 535 Outside North Gate	First month, 4th, 5th, 6th	Hua Miao
[?] -chou in the Third District	First month: 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th	Ch'ing Miao
Chiang-chia-Ma-lung in the Fourth District	First month: 6th	Hua Miao
Ping-chai in the Fourth District	First month: 8th	Hua Miao
Chung-yü-shan in the Fourth District	First month: 10th	Hua Miao

Among the above locations the dancing areas at the Flower Dance Hill belonging to the Hua Miao and the Upper Village belonging to the Ch'ing Miao are the largest. The dates set for such occasions are not subject to change, wind or rain notwithstanding. On the day of the dance all the community, without regard to wealth, age or sex, go to the appointed place in groups. The festivity of the occasion can well be imagined. The following is a detailed description of the flower dance.

A. The Method of the Flower Dance. 1) The Flower Slope
527 and the Flower Tree. When the Miao perform the flower dance
535 they use the flower slope and the flower tree. The flower slope
842 is the place where they dance, also called the "Hua-ch'ang " [flower yard], located on a hill in the neighborhood of a village, or half-way up a hill, or on level ground. The owner of the land where the dance takes place is known as the "flower host," generally a very influential person of the area. The land chosen for the flower slope has a quality of permanency. Before the flower dance is held, the slope is decorated with a tree of about a dozen feet in height, known as the "flower tree." One day before the event the flower host, blowing a trumpet, would welcome the tree to the flower slope, preferably a tree with green branches and leaves on the top. It is best when the tree is stolen from

[196 cont.]
535 somebody else's land and duly cursed by him. The flower trees in
527 the various flower slopes are changed either once a year or [197]
842 once every few years, depending upon whether some family
would receive the tree after the dance. If a childless couple
in the Miao village near the flower slope should give a feast for
the guests to receive the tree into their home, the host would be
happy to have the tree removed. The following year a new
flower tree would be found for the slope. At the same time
the family receiving the tree would make its timber into a bed.
When the childless couple sleep in this bed they would become
fertile and produce a son.

535 2) Participants. When a certain area holds a flower dance,
527 men and women, old and young, from all the villages nearby
would come in bands. Young men and women would carry
bundles on their backs, and on approaching the flower slope the
men would open them and change into new clothes and nailed
boots, with short flutes dangling around the waist, and leather
or wooden bags hanging behind. As headgear they use pheasant
[301] feathers adorned with strips of colored cloth streaming in the air.
They carry in their hands five-pipe or six-pipe bamboo-wind
instruments [lu-sheng]. The women also change into new clothes,
[292] new skirts and jackets of bright patterns. The Chinese merchants
of the area would establish stalls to sell candies, fruits and toys.
Arriving at the flower slope the men would surround the flower
tree in a circle, dancing as they move along and playing the
bamboo-wind instruments. Listening to the music, the dancers
would make noise by stamping their nailed shoes on the ground
as they dance along in a rhythmic din. After circling a few
times, the paired dancers fall into line, making the steps now
left, now right, and now making a break as they follow the
cadence of the music. First the men play bamboo wind instruments
and later the women play mouth organs. The crowd dances
around the tree a few times or as many as a dozen times. Outside
the slope still others would play clarinets [so-na, a type of
clarinet], bamboo wind instruments, and flutes, forming bands by
themselves. The women often form groups of their own. Some

[197 cont.]
527 would just cluster around and watch, while others would disperse
535 to sing and joke and play mouth organs. The noises on the slope soon become confused as the festivity wears on. After the dance the old and the middle-aged would form groups to help themselves with refreshments while the young men and women would scatter to the high cliffs and wilderness to sing and talk, such laxity being altogether permissible on this day.

527 B. The Purposes of the Flower Dance. 1) The Belief in
535 a Prosperous Harvest. The Miao have no other pursuits besides
241 agriculture, and in case of famine there are no means to maintain livelihood. So during the first month when there is a respite between farm activities they hold the flower dance to pray for a bountiful year with an adequate rainfall to bring about a rich harvest in all the grain. This superstitious belief is not only indulged in by the Miao, but shared by the local Chinese as well.
[648] Therefore, in case that the Miao themselves cannot maintain order at the dancing slope, the Chinese [198] are always ready to offer help. Sometimes the Chinese are even willing to put up the money for the flower slope and welcome the Miao to the dance as a prosperous harvest benefits all the people concerned.

527 2) The Belief in the Acquisition of a son. The Miao of
535 the area believe firmly that the flower dance facilitates child-
842 birth. So at the dance one often sees couples wearing unembroidered jackets with blankets on their back for, it is said, after the flower dance the conception of a child is most likely. There are also couples who after being childless for a long time, welcome the flower tree to their house and give feasts at great expense to entertain visitors. When the tree arrives at the gaily decorated house, it is received to the accompaniment of firecrackers and instrumental music from the lu-sheng and so-na. The hosts kneels down to welcome the tree and blesses it with many lucky words in anticipation of a son. This is another reason why the Hua Miao perform the flower dance.

527 3) The Selection of a Mate. Many Miao choose their
535 partners in life at the flower dance, and many parents follow
584 their sons and daughters to the scene to observe whether the ones selected are satisfactory. After the event they would ask a

[198 cont.]

535 go-between to arrange the match. Therefore, young men and
527 women everywhere try to make as many new clothes as possible
584 to be worn on this occasion. The dancers sometimes change
their clothes a few times a day. In short, the custom of the
flower dance has prevailed for a long time. Some dance with
the hope of acquiring children while others, among the illusive
shadows and to the tune of scintillating music, look secretly but
intently for his or her future mate. For the unmarried men and
women the purpose of the flower dance is to seek a partner in
life.

535 (II) The Market Dance. The market dance is also an im-
527 portant annual event with the Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao in
443 this area. The dance is similar to the flower dance, except that
it does not require a flower tree and that it has no fixed date
and place. It is held generally after the transplantation of
young rice-plants in the fourth or fifth month, or after the
ripening of the crop in the seventh or eighth month. It is held
[202] at the market fair, but the announcement is made at a previous
fair by the host (or promoter, who is generally a Chinese) with
two men, one beating a gong, and the other balancing a bamboo
pole on his shoulder, on which is tied a belt with flower designs.
This belt is presented as a souvenir by the girl to the boy when
they talk love at the dance. When the two men circle around
the fair once the crowd would know that the next one would be a
market dance. On that occasion bands of men and women from
all parts would come with new clothes as for the flower dance;
men playing so-na and lu-sheng, and talking all the way. Ar-
riving at the fair they would perch on the high mounds or stay in
the low open ground outside the market place, playing musical
instruments and singing songs. Young men and women take this
opportunity to meet new friends or [199] renew old acquaintances.
[243] The old people believe that the market dance in the fourth month,
when the buckwheat and other grains flower, can encourage the
yielding of more crops, and the market dance in the seventh
month can bring about firmer and larger seeds. The market dance
is known proverbially as the "grain dance," a name which clearly
reveals its superstitious origin.

[199 cont.]

(III) The Moon Dance. The moon dance in the fourth month
535 is the nocturnal meeting of the Miao-I in the An-shun area. Ac-
832 cording to Miao-I customs, whenever the moon and the stars are
bright, young men and women may go out at this period of the
year in groups of a few persons or a dozen or more each to some
quiet, lonely spots in the vicinity of the village to play music and
dance. The steps for the dance are the same as those for the
flower dance. Young girls who are attracted by the music are
not prevented by parents from running out to watch the dance.
A man's glory is to extract a smile from a girl, and when her
parents are not taking notice he may take her to the woods to
whisper to her honeyed words of love. Therefore, the moon
dance is an occasion for love-making by the Miao-I youths.

(IV) The "Kan-piao." The moon dance described above
517 provides night recreations and scenes of love serenades for the
832 Miao-I. The "kan-piao" is another form of recreation that
gives men and women a chance to fall in love, but it may be
pursued during night or day. The "kan-piao" is also known by
various names such as "ta-ma-lan," "yao-ma-lang," "ta-piao,"
and "ling-piao." To perform it, the man would first whistle
[534] by means of some leaves in the mouth or play the flute as a
signal to entice the lover to some shaded nook to exchange
lovers' vows. An ideal place for "kan-piao" is a deep forest
out of reach of human footsteps. In former times, in isolated
places outside the village, there were erected little sheds called
"flower chambers" for the rendezvous of young men and women.
These flower chambers, however, are now nine out of ten
destroyed. Ordinarily, when they carry on "kan-piao," the
man would take the girl home, otherwise he would be accused
of kidnapping. If a girl takes a man home, her parents would
[574] not only leave them alone, but are also obliged to kill a chicken
and provide wine in order to show the graciousness of their
daughter in receiving guests. The custom of "kan-piao" is most
popular with the Chung-chia in the An-shun district. They have
comparatively fewer forms of recreation than the Hua Miao, and
the young people among them often indulge in "kan-piao" as a
[579] happy pastime. Often in "kan-piao" a man gets into a fight

[199 cont.]

517 832 579 with weapons over a girl. Such brawls, known as "seeking enemies," are not infrequent.

534 [200] (V) Musical Instruments. The Miao-I within the district are fond of playing musical instruments. These include the liu-sheng [six-pipe bamboo wind instrument], wu-sheng [five-pipe bamboo wind instrument], k'ou-ch'in [mouth organ or harmonica], hsiao-ti [flutes and fifes] and so-na [clarinet-type wood-wind instrument], of which the liu-sheng is the most common among the Miao-I. Each family, no matter how rich or poor, owns one. The instruments are described as follows:

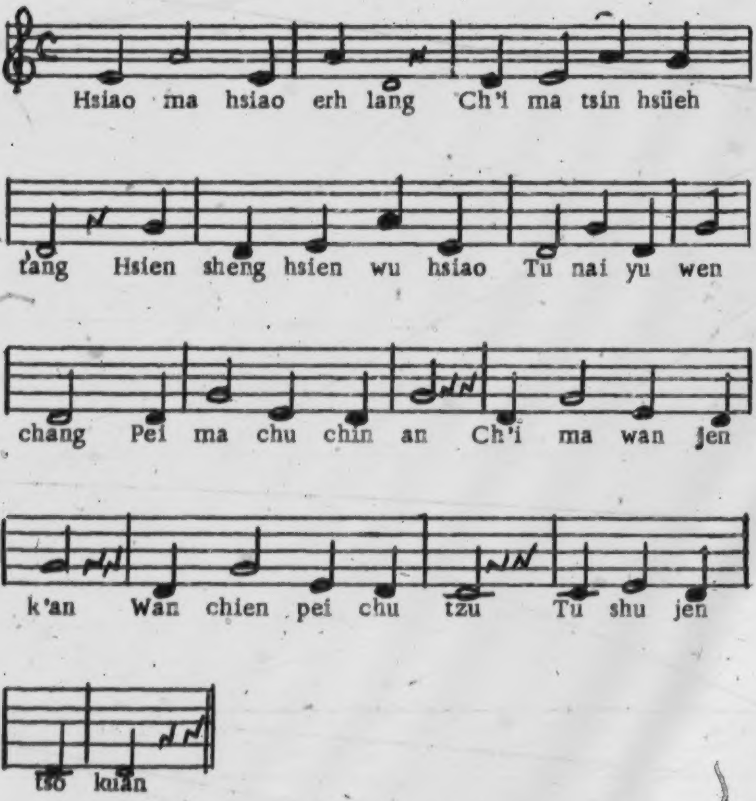
(a) The liu-sheng. This instrument is called liu-sheng六笙 because its bamboo tubes can give six [liu六] tones. It is also called lu-sheng蘆笙 from the word "lu"蘆, meaning "bamboo-reed." It is made of six bamboo tubes of varying lengths, one end of which is inlaid with a brass plate as a metallic tongue. The bamboo tubes are inserted into either a round or square wooden case, at one end of which is a wooden handle. Each tube has a hole, through which the player blows and sucks, and which he stops at will with his fingers, thus issuing different sounds. The varying lengths of the bamboo tubes make it possible to have both high and low pitches.

The use of the liu-sheng is very extensive. At the flower dance, the market dance, the moon dance and other gatherings this is the most important musical instrument. During the funeral ceremony the liu-sheng renders the most solemn music. Young men who wish to excel others have no regard for the time con-
[832] sumed in mastering the art of playing this instrument, for it is the best recommendation to the fair sex. The following are two com-
533 mon tunes for the six-tube bamboo wind-instrument. Its music, simple and clear, is used to accompany songs that are widely sung in the Miao-I area.

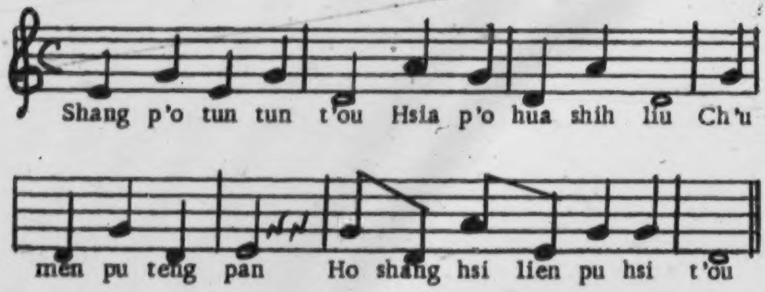
[200 cont.]

No. 1

533
539


Hsiao ma hsiao erh lang Ch'i ma tsin hsüeh
tang Hsien sheng hsien wu hsiao Tu nai yu wen
chang Pei ma chu chin an Ch'i ma wan jen
k'an Wan chien pei chu tzu Tu shu jen
tso kuan

No. 2


Shang p'o tun tun t'ou Hsia p'o hua shih liu Ch'u
men pu teng pan Ho shang hsi lien pu hsi t'ou

[201 cont.]

No. 1

539

On a little pony a little boy
   Has gone riding to school:
The teacher thinks that I'm too small,
   But my stomach flows with learning.

On a white horse with a golden saddle,
   I ride as I watch people.
I see the white pillars
   Where a student has become official.

No. 2

Up the slope the rider nods his head;
   Down the slope there are slippery pebbles,
Going outdoors without a mate,
   The monk washes his face but not his head.

534 (b) The wu-sheng. The five-tube bamboo wind instrument is almost constructed similarly to the six-tube instrument, except it has five holes instead of six and that its shape is slightly flatter. This instrument is played by young men with licentious tunes to seduce young women, and generally accompanied by dancing.

(c) The k'ou-ch'in. The mouth organ is a woman's musical instrument among the Hua Miao. It is made of two pieces of brass plates each three inches long, with a crevice hollowed out in the center in the form of a tongue-shaped awl. It is played against the lips by blowing out and sucking in air, the thumb plucking lightly at the end of the brass plate with each breath. The pitch and quantity of the notes are regulated by the mouth. The little tunes from this instrument are very pleasant to hear.

(d) The hsiao-ti. The flutes and fifes are made by the Miao themselves from bamboo tubes of varying lengths and

[201 cont.]

534 sizes. All the young men are fond of playing these instruments. It is a first step toward playing the so-na. On the other hand, a trumpeter must first learn how to play the flute or fife. The latter can also produce music with a seducive lilt, not any less licentious than the five-tube bamboo wind instrument.

[202] (e) The so-na. The Miao-I are very fond of playing the so-na, a clarinet type of instrument. One sees young men and cowboys practicing it. This popular instrument resembles the trumpet [la-pa] used in funeral ceremonies. Originally the use of the so-na was limited to funeral and sacrificial functions in the same way that the local Chinese use cymbals, [764] gongs and drums. When the Miao-I have a funeral, people do not sleep at night and the so-na is used to revive the spirit. Furthermore, as the lamentations at a Miao-I funeral are most sad and heart-rending, the so-na is used to drown out the pitiful wails so that they will not be heard outside. But, today, on all festive occasions such as weddings, both the Chinese and the Miao-I play this clarinet type of instrument to lend gaiety to the affairs.

Besides the above instruments there are also brass drums, lutes [p'i-pa], moon harps, two-string violins, wooden leaves and horns, but they are not as popular.

533 (VI) Singing. Singing is very popular among the various Miao-I tribes in An-shun. It is regarded as a necessary requirement in social gatherings, and good singers are admired and applauded by the public. Singing provides a good medium for young men and women to get together. Those who cannot sing will have trouble in solving their marital problems. Therefore, the Miao-I men and women all know the words of the songs by heart since childhood. The structure of the songs is quite different from those sung by the local Chinese, and they sound exotic and peculiar to us. The following are some specimens of the songs sung by the Hua Miao, Ch'ing Miao and Chung-chia; the words are freely translated, but the tunes cannot be reproduced here.

[202 cont.]

No. 1

539 The field is large and the earth is raw;
To plough it fills me with fright and awe:
I dig, I rake, I shovel and I pound —
Useless, save a maiden wife is found.

[203]

No. 2

The weeds by the roadside yield white flowers;
Homeless, I seek other people's bowers:
When fuel is gathered, rice is cold —
My tears and woes are manifold.

No. 3

On the mu-i I sadly mourn, [mu-i - music instrument]
And play the music until dawn:
When girls hear the woeful strain,
From copious tears they can't refrain.

No. 4

Here and there the father cries,
All at home the mother sighs:
Whither have all the children gone?
In the woods they sing a song.

No. 5

Thinly the rain falls dripping,
Ruefully comes an orphaned stripling:
How much cold rice has he eaten?
How many a time is he beaten?

No. 6

Tobacco crop is bad this year;
My star and luck are sad I fear:
Every tiny flow'r I pluck
Bears no leaf and has no luck.

[203 cont.]

No. 7

539 The seventh day of seventh moon
Is pheasant hunting season soon:
The pheasant flies across the pass,
My girl and I are alone at last.

No. 8

The gold tipped chopstick falls
Where the pretty maiden calls:
I purposely toss it around
So that my maiden can be found.

No. 9

This road to Kweichow, winding and long;
Vehicles run all night till dawn:
Reaching homestead with a pang
Of joy, for soon it is Kweiyang.

No. 10

Birds in heaven fly in pairs;
The man in clouds assumes stupid airs —
Hey, you fool!
There's none prettier than she who's there.

[114] (b) The songs of the Ching-miao. (Free translation from the Miao language into Chinese, but faithful translation from the Chinese into English.)

Ordinary Love Songs (Serenades for Kan-piao)

No. 1

The moon rises in the gloaming,
With our lovers we go roaming;

[203 cont.]

539 But when the moon suspends on high,
We settle down for a lovers' sigh.

No. 2

Many buttons adorn my gown;
I have brother, you have wife:
If you agree, my brother you own,
But give her to me for all my life.

No. 3

Peaches half red are in June;
I love maidens with a blush,
Lilting, bending to my tune,
Rosy faces all a-flush.

No. 4

Outside your door grows an ash,
Bending, swinging with the wind:
Fair maid, do not feel abash;
Without your beck'ning, I'm not the kind.

[204] No. 5

The girls carry water a long while,
But the tank is empty yet;
They traversed many a tedious mile
Only their lovers to beget.

No. 6 (Male voice)

Fell a bamboo in the grove,
And a fishing line I throw;
But not a single catch I prove,
Save a Chengtu maid in tow.

[204 cont.]

(Female voice)

539

The stars emerge upon the stars;
Two stars entwine in one part;
Gold hook upon the silver hook;
Your heart clinging on my heart.

No. 7 (Male voice)

Do not worry, do not weep;
Wrinkles show on your forehead:
If my words you loyally keep,
Many good days are far ahead.

(Female voice)

Do not worry, do not weep;
At my hip a banjo slings
To drown our songs and voices deep,
But pluck not my heartstrings.

No. 8 (Male voice)

The grass is leveled and rain descends;
The field is ready for planting:
Come and tell me what transcends
My love for you to land in.

(Female voice)

The rain falls on a simple rogue,
Leveling the grass, readying the field;
What confidences I him owe
To his droll flirtations yield?

[204 cont.]

Planting Songs (sung in the field)

539

No. 1

The planting maids are busy planting:
Who has the time to come ranting,
Chasing after the maiden fair?
No, not till the harvest is there.

[205] No. 2

The unplanted seeds must be kept:
No one has any free time left
To bother with man or sister —
Not even to attend to a blister.

No. 3

The rice is planted in serried ranks,
And water flows in from buried tanks:
Who is singing two rows down?
Where's your sister? You only frown.

6

No. 4

The plants must be placed with care,
Ridding the stalk and leaving it bare:
Our legs are soaked in watery mud;
Hardly we hear any sounding thud.

No. 5

Down the terrace are other fields:
The painted face a servant shields;
The eel in mud is still an eel,
Which salt makes tasteful a great deal.

[205 cont.]

No. 6

539 The high mountain is so near yonder;
To the deep water there we wander;
On the bridge the maid eats meal,
But in the cow shed our love will seal.

Wine Song (Sung at feast)

Here's some gift to relation sent;
To receive it a fair cousin smiles:
For us a table and benches set,
And the host runs home many miles.

A crowded table is not our worry;
Your wine is what we fear:
For to eat and drink and all a-flurry,
To be intoxicated here.

[114] (c) The Songs of the Chung-chia.(Free translation from the Miao language, but faithful translation from the Chinese.)

No. 1

The pouch is chiselled on two sides;
We share the road from different homes:
To talk to you - my yearning urge,
But fear some one's vengeance surge.

No. 2

Three scarves hidden by a screen;
A maid has her good husband seen:
Others move on silently,
Bending, tearful, mournfully.

[205 cont.]

No. 3

539 A large lot of land without border —
Grass grows amuck, good for fodder:
This is what we mortals are
In this world without a lucky star.

No. 4

A long time I've not this roadway passed;
Moss and lichens cover it fast.
'Neath the lichens a trickle flows;
Here we drink to end our woes.

No. 5

Yonger maid, astride the fence,
In her hand a basket carries:
Why she stops, there and thence,
Why she stops and waits and tarries?

No. 6

In life and death she follows me
To the court of the magistrate:
Thirty thrashings tenderly;
Leave me alone — that is straight.

[206]

No. 7

When sun descends the slope is dark;
When a cloth is dipped in dye;
When a maid forsakes me in the park —
All linger on, the cloth and I.

[206 cont.]

No. 8

539 The groom is seventeen and the bride,
A maid of eighteen summers fair:
The duck is killed and the chicken fried
To honor the everlasting pair.

No. 9

But if for reasons they must sever,
Tear drops flow down in pain lest
The Judge refuse to let as ever
Him go east and her go west.

No. 10

At the market yester morn
Many items were displayed:
I searched for you here and yon;
At last returned, quite dismayed.

[For information on South Chinese tribal groups generally, including an occasional reference to Shan-Thai groups, see 12 Wu and Ch'en, Chapters 1, 6, and 8, AE5 Miao, category 116.]